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Dynamic Duo

For the last few months, critics have warned that the economic crisis would force Barack Obama to set aside his more ambitious ideas—starting with universal health care. For some, the issue has been one of priorities. With the economy in such desperate shape, the argument goes, Obama must devote all available manpower—and political capital—to measures that would rescue Wall Street and revive growth. "How much do you want to tweak health care while dealing with bank mortgages?" asks Deloitte and Touche's Paul Keckley. For others, the problem has been the price tag: Given the realities of the budget, the federal government simply doesn't have enough money to start giving everybody decent medical insurance. Speaking for this increasingly popular point of view, the Urban Institute's Robert Reischauer noted recently, "Fiscal resources that might have been devoted to the unavoidable short run costs of health reform will be needed to stimulate the economy and shore up the financial system." To try health care reform now, he suggested, would be "difficult if not impossible."

It's a superficially logical argument—one that people like Reischauer, a well-respected budget expert, surely come by sincerely. Fully implemented, universal health insurance will require an infusion of somewhere between $50 billion and $130 billion per year. With the annual budget deficit likely to hit $1 trillion this year, where would the money come from? And, while it's important to maximize the number of people with health insurance, surely it's more important to maximize the number of people with jobs and steady incomes. But neither argument holds up that well under scrutiny. On the contrary, the economic downturn actually makes the case for universal health insurance even stronger than it was before.

Start with the present economic crisis. By now, even the most hard-core fiscal conservatives are discovering their inner Keynesians, calling for new government spending to stimulate the economy. But spending on what exactly? Infrastructure is the most obvious target, because infrastructure spending creates jobs. But recent reports suggest that the number of projects that are ready to go—that is, those that could start up as soon as money is available—would account for only tens of billions in new spending, which is just a fraction of the stimulus many economists say we need in the very near future. There's also the possibility of tax rebates. But recent experience suggests that all but the poorest tend to save the money rather than spend it—which basically defeats the purpose.

On the other hand, most proposals for universal coverage start with a federally financed expansion of Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program. That means more poor people would get health insurance right away. And, as economist Jonathan Gruber argued recently in *The New York Times*, expanding those programs provides a superb economic stimulus. When poor people get health insurance, they purchase medical goods and services. More important, they start spending money on other things, since they no longer have to put aside money to pay for medical emergencies. That funnels cash back into the economy, promoting growth. "Health care reform," Gruber concluded, "is good for our economy."

Some fiscal conservatives, upset that universal health care would require all sorts of new spending upfront, aren't so sure. They argue—rightly—that the rising cost of Medicare and Medicaid is the primary reason why the federal government's long-term budget picture is so scary. If we can only avoid overwhelming deficits and, by extension, a lackluster economy in the future by spending *less* money on these health care programs over time, surely spending *more* money on them now makes no sense.

But, actually, it does. The reason Medicare and Medicaid are getting so expensive is that health care, overall, is getting so expensive. (Relative to private health insurance, Medicare and Medicaid control costs a little better.) But the only rational, not to mention humane, way to control health care costs is through system-wide reforms—the kind that are a lot harder, if not impossible, to implement in the disorganized and volatile insurance environment we have today. Making sure everybody has insurance is the first step—or, depending on how you do it, the first few steps—toward creating one common system.

Universal health care can also bolster the economy's long-term health in other ways. Sometimes people stay in jobs they'd prefer to leave just because they fear losing their insurance; this phenomenon, known as "job lock," distorts the labor market and makes the economy less efficient than it would be otherwise. Making health insurance universally available would change that. And, just like investments in infrastructure, investments in health care—properly targeted—can improve productivity, whether by encouraging investments in information technology (something most reform plans would do, in order to streamline record-keeping) or simply by creating a healthier workforce. Don't forget, too, that universal health care should ultimately make life easier for businesses struggling with the cost of employee coverage. If that need doesn't sound pressing to you, check out the auto companies' latest stock prices.

As it happens, a few key people in Washington already seem to believe these arguments—not least among them, the guy who was just elected president. Asked repeatedly during the campaign which of his big priorities he planned to shelve because of the economic crisis, he said over and over again that he remained committed to health care reform—along with climate-change policy—because the rationale for each remained as imperative as before. In each case, he noted, spending money now would improve growth in the short run while making the country more productive, and prosperous, in the long run. Obama had it right then. The key is sticking to that view now. ◆

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Summers of Our Content

Budget hawks and neo-Keynesians: a love story.

JONATHAN CHAIT

It's been a month since Democrats swept the elections, right about the normal time for internecine warfare to break out. Last time the party won power, moderate deficit hawks and liberal neo-Keynesians immediately set out to wage a War for the Soul of the Clinton Presidency. Things got pretty vicious. There were no reported cases of knife wounds or tire-iron beatings, but furious memos exchanged hands, bitter memoirs were written by the losers, and medium-grade warfare simmered throughout the remainder of the decade at think tanks and magazines.

This time around, it's as if they gave a war for the soul of the Obama presidency and nobody came. Deficit hawks and deficit doves are living together in perfect harmony. A few weeks ago, longtime ideological adversaries Jared Bernstein, from the prototypically liberal Economic Policy Institute, and Wall Street darling Robert Rubin actually authored a joint op-ed arguing that the liberal-moderate split no longer mattered. "[H]ow real are these differences?" they wrote, poignantly if not poetically. "Our view—and we come from pretty different analytical perspectives—is that in many important ways, they are false, and serve as more of a distraction than a map." Can you feel the love?

Oh, sure, complaints and jockeying for influence have not disappeared altogether, but what little of it there is has the feel of going through the motions. The striking thing is that liberals and centrists have come to almost total agreement on the Democratic economic program. How did it happen?

First, as I wrote in these pages two years ago, the nature of the economy during the last eight years forced centrists to rethink their premises (see "Freakoutonomics," November 6, 2006). After 1973, the main problem of the U.S. economy was that it didn't grow fast enough to create rising living standards. During the 1990s, centrists believed that reducing the budget deficit would hold down interest rates and allow greater business investment, leading to higher productivity and, eventually, rising wages across the board. That's exactly what happened, though you can debate the degree to which Clinton's policies contributed.

During the Bush years, the economy also grew—not as fast as during the Clinton years, but fast enough. The problem was that the gains from that growth were radically maldistributed. Where the Clinton years saw rising wages for even the poorest workers, the Bush years had stagnant wages for all but the very rich, who reaped spectacular gains. You can, again, debate how much Bush's policies contributed, but the fact was that economic growth was no longer by itself sufficient to bring about rising living standards for most Americans. This made centrists more inclined to support policies that would divide the pie more evenly (like making union organizing easier) and more reluctant to support policies that would increase inequality (like new free trade pacts).

Second, the current recession has done even more to bury the fiscal conservatism of the Clinton years. At the outset of the Clinton administration, liberals argued for economic stimulus to spark the economy. Moderates countered that the economy had already pulled out of recession and that it required a smaller deficit to pick up its long-term growth rate. When the economy did grow, and the budget deficit shriveled, moderates further advocated paying down the national debt rather than spending the surplus on social programs and tax cuts.

Liberals accused the administration of proposing (as Robert Kuttner put it at the time) "permanent surplus." But permanent surplus was never the idea. Clintonites thought they should pay down the debt when the economy boomed so that they could have more room to run it up when the economy eventually went bust. As Lawrence Summers, one of Clinton's centrist Treasury secretaries, put it in 1999, "Now is the time to reload the fiscal cannon." Today, Summers and the rest of the Clintonites agree that now is the time to fire that cannon.

Of course, you'd expect that, when the economy returns to health, the old battle lines will form again, as moderates argue for deficit reduction while liberals resist. And probably some fissures will reappear over how much deficit to allow. But the centrists won't return to the same pay-down-the-debt stance they took during the Clinton years, because—this is reason number three, if you're counting—they've figured out that the Bush administration played them for fools.

The moderates still believe that paying down the national debt made economic sense in the 1990s. Unfortunately, doing so failed to account for the political reality that the Republican Party had absolutely no interest in fiscal responsibility. All that Clintonian thriftiness did was leave a bigger surplus for George W. Bush to devote to tax cuts. Bush portrayed the very fact that the government was paying down its debt as an "overcharge" of the taxpayer. ("A surplus," he said, "means the government has more money than it needs.")

Democratic moderates still favor fiscal responsibility in theory, but they realize that *unilateral* fiscal responsibility is a sucker's game. Democrats under Clinton had to defer their own goals and take all the political heat (which they did, by passing a deficit-reduction bill with zero GOP votes in 1993). Then, when the Republicans got into office, they imposed their priorities on the government without worrying about the cost. It's a form of moral hazard: Republicans can make as big a mess as they want out of the federal budget, because they know Democrats will be there to volunteer for the clean-up committee. And they have every incentive to continue acting this way until Democrats stop cooperating.

Recently, Republican economists Greg Mankiw and Lawrence Lindsey urged Obama to rein in spending so that deficits don't depress long-term growth. Such touching concern for the children of tomorrow was absent when they were cheering on Bush's wild tax-cutting binges. I think most Democratic fiscal centrists responded to these entreaties the same way I did: How about we enact health care reform and education reform, and *then* we can figure out how to tame the deficit?

Republicans have expressed surprise and joy that the Obama economic team is laced with moderates, not traditional liberals. What they haven't figured out yet is that the difference amounts to very little. ◆

TRB
From Washington

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The Supplicants

Sucking up to the White House-in-waiting.

For Cecelia Prewett, the phone calls and e-mails began pouring in immediately. On November 6, her former boss, Representative Rahm Emanuel, had just been named chief of staff to President-elect Barack Obama. Suddenly, it seemed everyone Prewett had ever met in Washington was getting back in touch with her. Her inbox filled with notes from well-wishers. Her cell phone rang so incessantly that she had to turn it off at work. When she logged onto Facebook (her profile mentions her previous work as Emanuel's spokesperson), she saw that she was getting pummeled with friend requests—and not just from D.C. climbers. She had new admirers from around the globe, including Europe and South Korea. One pushy New Yorker made three failed passes at Prewett before she blocked him, and an enterprising Frenchman sent her an open letter of counsel ("lettre ouverte à Monsieur Obama"), in the apparent hope that she would slip it to the incoming president.

"It was absolutely ridiculous," says the 37-year-old Prewett, now a vice president at the American Association for Justice, who was "with Rahm before being with Rahm was cool."

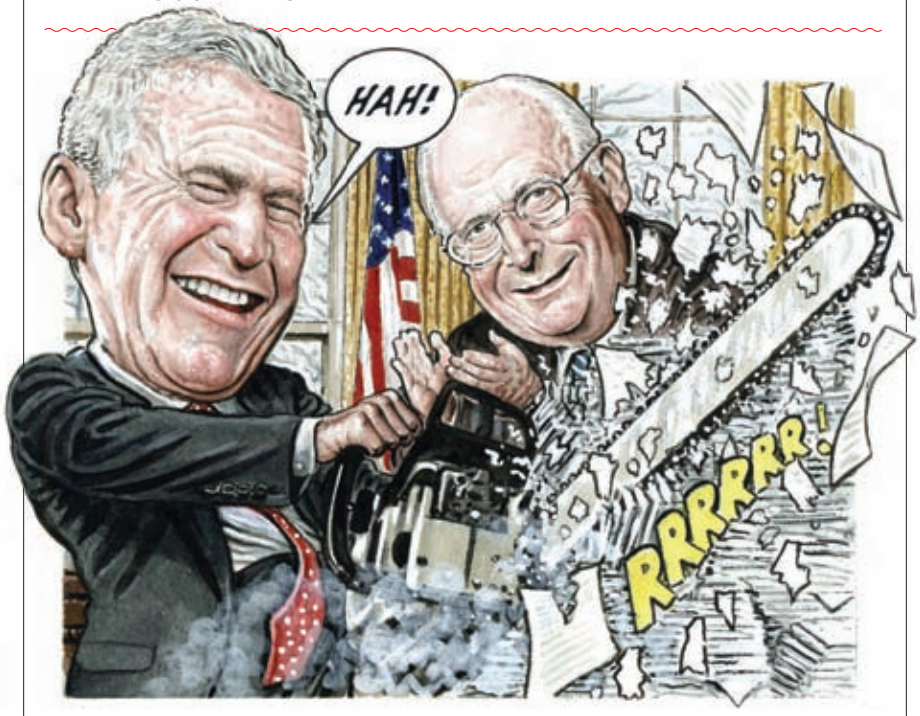
In recent weeks, just about all of Emanuel's staffers, current and former, have found themselves under similar assault from new friends, old friends, and friends of friends. Many of the calls and e-mails seemed to follow a suspicious pattern: an initial show of excitement (Did you have any idea he was in the running?); some strained small talk (Is the Rahm dead fish story really true?); and, finally, the business at hand—resumés. "There's a good selection of people who want to know if I can get their resumé into the hands of the right person," says John Borovicka, a municipal bond banker in Chicago who was a top aide to Emanuel for several years. "That's followed quickly by the question of whether I have any inaugural tickets."

If career jockeying is an age-old sport in Washington, then Democrats are now caught in the throes of World Cup fever. With Obama headed to the White House, 22 seats picked up in the House, and at least seven more in the Senate, Democrats are staring slack-jawed at the best political job market they've seen in at least a generation. Add to that the groupie-level enthusiasm for the incoming president, along with the worst private-sector employment numbers in 14 years, and you wind up with plenty of Democrats who are worried they may get trampled by their friends in a race down Pennsylvania Avenue.

The hysteria is particularly acute among the more spry Democrats, say, 35-ish and under. There are the new kids on the block: Obama's sprawling campaign drew on the energies of thousands of youthful staffers and volunteers from around the country, many of whom now feel entitled to a share of the spoils. Then there are the junior Beltway wonks who toiled through the dark days of Washington: Aside from the House and Senate gains in 2006, these young politicos have known nothing but electoral defeat and poor employment prospects since they first arrived on the Hill. Now, the problem is no longer a dearth of quality jobs. Quite the opposite: It's as if *too many* opportunities beckon. There's the Obama administration! There's the House majority! There's the nearly filibuster-proof Senate!

Even lobbyists are trying to get in on the fun, despite the president-elect's pledge to make it difficult for them to walk freely in and out of the revolving

WHITE HOUSE WATCH *With* **DREW FRIEDMAN**



Clearin' regulatory brush.

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door. Frightened by the prospect of missing out on an epoch-making presidency, some current Democratic lobbyists are now laying plans to bolt for the Hill, where they'll undergo a roughly two-year delousing process, and then gun for a job with the administration. "You think of Kennedy and the sixties, and the people who were part of that," says one starry-eyed campaign staffer, predicting an exodus from K Street.

Add in an untold number of bandwagon-hoppers who are eager to ditch their recession-plagued, non-political jobs to become a part of Camelot Redux, and the result is a Democrat free-for-all. "I was trying to explain this to my mom the other day," says a senior Democratic campaign official. "Imagine you have a dog pound. You've had these puppies in this pound for years and years, all of them eating the same kibble. But then they're let out of the pound, and they've got a lot of different opportunities to eat whatever they want. At the beginning, there's going to be a little cooperative feel to it. But, at some point, it's going to be every man for himself."

Even in this cutthroat environment, young Dems quickly learn not to make a show of their ambitions. This is part of the etiquette of job-seeking in a No Drama Obama administration. "Right now, it's that first string of e-mails going around—the 'Hey, congratulations' kind of e-mails," explains one young D.C. Democrat, who works on congressional campaigns. "You start with the soft stuff." (Like other administration job seekers quoted in this story, he spoke on condition of anonymity: "I don't want to say anything that hurts my own prospects.")

Democratic strategist Steve Rabinowitz, who was around for Bill Clinton's transition and has found himself informally advising administration job seekers in the last few weeks, says a combination of aggressive networking and feigned modesty is the key to success. "You have to understand, little of this comes to you entirely on merit. And yet, nobody likes somebody who insists or demands that they deserve it. So you have to find the balance between these two."

There are no easy ways to get one's resumé on top of the pile. Aside from knowing someone who's close with one of Obama's early appointees, the surest bet is to know a member of the transition team. Every few days after the election, Obama's team would blast out a press release naming another handful of new team members. Whenever these names became public, Hill staffer e-mail groups took notice. "Someone would always send out an e-mail: 'Do you know anyone on this list?'" says a Democratic lobbyist. Not once did the lobbyist see a response to that question. "If I do know someone, I'm not going to say anything," she explains.

Job seekers recognize that everyone else is angling for a post-election gig—even those who already have desirable jobs—which is why networking itself can be perilous. Rabinowitz has been counseling job seekers to step lightly around just about every Democrat they know, including close friends and roommates. "Someone you're asking to make a call on your behalf may not have known about the opening, and they may have somebody in mind who they think is a better pick."

The lobbyist offers a case in point. She heard from an old friend who said some plum jobs were going to open up on a particular congressional committee. The old friend wanted to know if the lobbyist could make a few calls and put in a good word. The request got the lobbyist's wheels turning. "I'm thinking, I could do that job," she says. "Maybe I should put in a call for myself."

Rabinowitz says a job seeker will know immediately whether a connection can help by how many calls he or she makes on the job seeker's behalf. (Telling—but increasingly common—is none at all: The lobbyist used to arrange informational interviews for friends of friends whenever she could. "Now, I'm not going to use my chips for somebody like that," she says. "I know that sounds bitchy, but the stakes are just too high.") The worst sign, Rabinowitz says, is when a possible connection steers the job seeker to the online application process.

That would be Change.gov. "I've been referring them all to Change.gov," says Aaron Fischbach, a former Hill staffer who experienced a surge in popularity when his old boss, Tom Daschle, was tapped by Obama to be the secretary of Health and Human Services. Within just five days of going live after the election, the website had received more than 140,000 job applications, making it about as good a portal to the White House as Monster.com.

Many of those applications to Change.gov no doubt have come from Chicagoland. "I think there's a general perception among people in Chicago that it doesn't get any better than it does here, as far as learning how politics works on a door-to-door level," says Borovicka, who's heard from many of his former Chicago-area interns who are now looking east. "This is the first time people are actually considering leaving."

Dan Shomon was campaign manager during Obama's 2000 run for the House, and his relationship with the president-elect goes back to the statehouse, where he served as Obama's staffer. In recent weeks, Shomon has heard from so many hyper-aggressive jostlers that he had to create a log to keep track of all the correspondence. Since the night of November 4, he's handled more than 600 phone

David Cowles

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calls, e-mails, and text messages from more than 150 people who are fishing for one thing or another, including an estranged former girlfriend he dated in college in 1986. (Admittedly, not all of them are gaming for a cabinet slot—two parties wanted to hook the Obamas up with a shelter dog.) The very morning after the election, Shomon got an urgent message from a woman he hadn't talked to in years. He quickly responded, worried she might be ill. "I think she wanted to be social secretary to Michelle Obama," says Shomon. The woman later called back to apologize. "Ninety-nine percent of politicians would trade for these overzealous supporters," Shomon says. "Still, I have a life, too, and they have to be sensitive to that."

Shomon shouldn't count on resuming that life anytime soon: Most Democrats agree the jockeying will only get worse as they head into winter. After all, the more positions Obama fills, the more people there are to network with. Resumé-polishing will soon give way to backbiting, and anyone who ever knew anybody headed to the White House will be hearing from acquaintances old and new.

"It's been a steady stream—I hope it dies down," Shomon says, sounding a bit weary as he wades through his e-mails. "Just today, a guy told me, 'I need to talk to you right away—it's urgent.' So I know it's definitely got something to do with Obama."

Dave Jamieson

Dave Jamieson is a freelance writer living in Washington, D.C.

Clerical Terror

The roots of jihad in India.

If we needed reminding, the carnage in Mumbai proved yet again that South Asia is home to some of the world's deadliest Islamist terrorists. Usually missing from press coverage, though, is any sense of the origin of these movements, which are often assumed to be tied to the grievances of the Arab Middle East and the fate of Jerusalem.

That is a misconception. Historically, the roots of radical Islam belong at least as much in South Asia as in the Middle East. And one individual, wholly unfamiliar to most Westerners, played an indispensable role in founding and shaping that movement. When modern radicals call for *sharia* law, when they demand an Islamic state active in every sphere of life, when they urge a revolutionary jihad against the infidel world, they are drawing on the ideas of a India-born cleric called Maulana Mawdudi.

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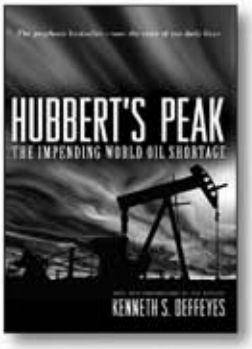

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Modern Islamism traces its origins to three men born in the opening years of the twentieth century. Two of them are well known in the West: Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini and Egypt's Sayyid Qutb. Both, however, owed an immense intellectual debt to the third man, Syed Abul Ala Mawdudi, known by the honorific "Maulana," which means master. Until his death in 1979, Mawdudi was the critical link between the various theaters of transnational activism, between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian Revolution, between Kashmir and Western Europe. Mawdudi's thinking was South Asian in origin and character, as was the international Islamist movement he inspired—a movement whose flowering we are still watching today.

MAWDUDI WAS BORN in what is now the state of Maharashtra, in a British-ruled India littered with monuments of a collapsed Muslim power. It was a world marked by the humiliating political failure of the Islamic regimes, the same failure that so influenced Qutb and Khomeini as well. In India, restive under what they saw as infidel domination, Muslims struggled to find a role in a nationalist movement in which Hindus massively outnumbered them. Making matters more difficult for religious Muslims, even the available forms of modernization and anti-imperialism were Western and radically secular as well. As a young journalist in the 1920s, Mawdudi plunged into Western literature and political thought, but he borrowed heavily from these traditions in order to modernize Islamic ideology.

Mawdudi's ideas have become such familiar commonplaces of the Islamist worldview that we can scarcely appreciate how radically innovative they were. His guiding assumption was a totalistic view of Islam: Everything in the universe was God's creation, so Muslims could freely use modern technology and organization—but only to build a visionary new Islamic order. Where Mawdudi broke from his contemporaries was in his utter rejection of all historic Islamic models as unworthy of Islam's First Age: He condemned virtually every achievement of Islamic politics and culture as *jahiliyya*, ignorance, the word normally used to describe the pagan darkness that prevailed in Arabia before Muhammad's time. Muslims who resisted the call were part of a new *jahiliyya* and could legitimately become the targets of jihad.

This total rejection of the past shaped Mawdudi's views of the Islamic state, which he believed should be founded on *iqamat-i-deen*, "the establishment of religion." In this theocratic vision, society and the state would be subject entirely to Islamic law, *sharia*, which comprehended every aspect of human life and behavior. Mawdudi claimed that such a state would be a theo-democracy, in which elected officials would rule under clerical guidance. Yet it is difficult to understand his model as anything but totalitarian. As everything was subject to God, there could be no personal or private life that was not subject to law. Even he seemed to understand that. "Considered from this aspect," he wrote, "the Islamic State bears a kind of resemblance to the Fascist and Communist states."

Not surprisingly, Mawdudi preached an absolute confrontation between the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds. His Islamic state would free itself from all non-Muslim influences and would wage jihad against the whole non-Muslim world. In fairness, he makes it clear that he is talking about a spiritual rather than a military campaign, but his language easily lends itself to violent interpretations.

Mawdudi's strategic genius lay in integrating traditional and modern forms of authority. Like so many of the pioneers in Islamist movements, his roots lay in the Sufi tradition, which united personal mysticism with military prowess. Critically for modern developments, Sufis organized in close-knit and secretive fraternities pledged absolutely to a spiritual teacher—a structure that proved ideal for clandestine organization and resistance. The tradition, under Mawdudi's leadership, segued naturally into Leninist ideas about the revolutionary party with its faithful cadres.

In 1941, Mawdudi incorporated these ideas into Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), which he envisaged as a vanguard political party in the Leninist mold. In revolutionary style, JI also developed its network of associated organizations and fronts, including unions and student groups, with branches in India, Kashmir, and Bangladesh. Mawdudi headed the group until his retirement in 1972.

Although he remained based in Pakistan, Mawdudi was a principal founder of what became a global revolutionary cause. Early in his career, he found faithful pupils in Egypt, where in 1928 Hassan Al Banna founded the Ikhwan, the Muslim Brotherhood. At least by the early 1940s, Al Banna was reading Mawdudi. So was Sayyid Qutb, an Ikhwan alumnus who built on Mawdudi's stark picture of a civilizational clash between Islam and its enemies. Qutb borrowed and expanded Mawdudi's concept of *jahiliyya*, and he loved the heroic image of the Islamist party as revolutionary vanguard.

By the 1970s, Mawdudi's ideas—particularly his writings on jihad—were appearing freely in the works of Islamic radicals in Egypt, Palestine, and elsewhere. The more time Arab radicals spent in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the more assuredly they would be exposed to JI and to Mawdudi's thought. His ideas influenced Abdullah Azzam, the Palestinian militant who served as a mentor to the young Osama bin Laden during the anti-Soviet war in Afghanistan. South Asian communities overseas, including significant numbers in Britain, were hugely influenced by Mawdudi's work. Remarkably, Mawdudi's impact also extended to Shia Iran, where Ayatollah Khomeini reputedly met Mawdudi as early as 1963 and later translated the Master's works into Farsi. To the present day, Iran's revolutionary rhetoric often draws on his themes.

But it was on the subcontinent itself that Mawdudi had his greatest impact. Ever since the new nation of Pakistan was created in 1947, JI has campaigned to institutionalize Islamic values in every part of Pakistani society. The party initially met strong resistance, and Mawdudi was jailed four times and even survived a death sentence. But Islamization spread rapidly from the 1970s onward. Pakistan institutionalized Islamic views of banking and interest, clamped down on alcohol, and passed a new blasphemy law. Gender issues were a major battlefield, as JI struggled against enhanced women's rights and contraception. JI supported Pakistan's loathsome Hudood Ordinance of 1979, which made it virtually impossible to prosecute rapists while allowing the woman who reports a rape to be charged with fornication.

JI's success extended beyond elections and legislation. Jamaatis infiltrated Pakistan's military and intelligence establishments, which, by the 1970s, were rife with hard-line Islamist views. These agencies, especially the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), became the main conduit for Saudi money and influence, a link that became all the stronger during the Afghan war. In Kashmir, too, JI cooperated closely with ISI and sponsored its own mujahedin militia. JI is certainly not the only player in the revolutionary Islamist world, and, over the past decade, it

ANTHONY RUSSO

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has been supplanted by other, still more extreme groups. But without the framework provided by Mawdudi and JI, the other movements would never have developed as they did.

The neglect of Mawdudi's influence is a sad comment on Western knowledge about Islam and its history, but it also has worrying policy consequences. If modern Islamism is seen as an outgrowth of Middle Eastern conflicts and grievances, then those seeking a solution put a premium on resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict. But we can just as plausibly see Islamist extremism as the product of a wholly different region and culture that has minimal investment in Palestinian issues. Nor would this particular kind of anti-Westernism just fade away even if the Palestine issue were ever settled.

The continuing danger of Islamist radicalism in Pakistan is all the more alarming given that nation's volatile strategic position. As a U.S. congressional report released this month noted, "Were one to map terrorism and weapons of mass destruction today, all roads would intersect in Pakistan." If Mawdudi's heirs are not to see his vision realized, our incoming administration needs to take Pakistan very seriously. At a minimum, it should spend at least as much time seeking a settlement in Kashmir as in Palestine.

Philip Jenkins

Philip Jenkins is the author of The Lost History of Christianity.

Not So Fast

Don't hold your breath waiting for withdrawal from Iraq.

When it comes to Iraq, "withdrawal" seems to be the word of the day. In Washington, the incoming administration has revived the Obama campaign's 16-month timetable for removing combat troops from Iraq. At his press conference on Monday, for example, Obama said he still thought that timeframe was "realistic" and said he would be meeting with military commanders to discuss "how we proceed" in what he calls a "withdrawal process." Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said that Obama's timeframe was "agreeable," suggesting that the current Pentagon chief has also agreed to a withdrawal.

The agreement ratified on Thanksgiving Day by the Iraqi parliament would seem to lay out a road map for just the kind of withdrawal Obama has promised. It demands that all U.S. forces—with no exceptions—exit the country by the last calendar day of 2011 and that they return to their bases by the end of June 2009. What's more, it mandates that the unsightly international zone in the center of Iraq's capital be dismantled and requires the explicit approval of Iraq's government for any U.S. military actions against Iraq's neighbors or within the country. For those inclined to call America's presence in Iraq an occupation, the Status of Forces Agreement, or SOFA, as it is referred to at the Pentagon and Foggy Bottom, appears to end it.

All of this has left many with the impression that American soldiers will be out of Iraq by the time Obama begins his campaign for reelection. Or, as Senator Claire McCaskill told Fox News on Sunday: "The important part about that SOFA agreement is it embraces the kind of timetable that Barack Obama made a foundation of his campaign."

For all the talk of withdrawal and timetables, however, nothing like that is likely to happen. It is true that, as a result of the successful surge that the Democrats and some Republicans opposed, tens of thousands of American troops will begin to exit Iraq in the next three years. But American and Iraqi military and diplomatic officials insist that a residual U.S. force of considerable size is likely to remain for the medium to long term, as will the U.S. bases in Iraq that Democrats over the last two years have insisted must not be permanent.

A good picture of the size and shape of America's future presence in Iraq can be found in a memo sent by retired General Barry McCaffrey earlier last month to the head of the social sciences department at West Point, Colonel Michael Meese. The "after action report" was written following a tour of Iraq that McCaffrey took in October, during which he met with Iraqi political and military leaders, as well as General Ray Odierno and Ambassador Ryan Crocker. McCaffrey has been a reliable weathervane of military thinking throughout the Iraq war (though his media career likely ended after *The New York Times* published an exposé on his ties to defense contractors last week). He has also been a reliable surrogate for the thinking of Odierno and General David Petraeus, who understandably have tried to steer clear of the politics of the Iraq war.

In the report, obtained by The New Republic, McCaffrey writes, "We should assume that the Iraqi government will eventually ask us to stay beyond 2011 with a residual force of trainers, counterterrorist capabilities, logistics, and air power. (My estimate—perhaps a force of

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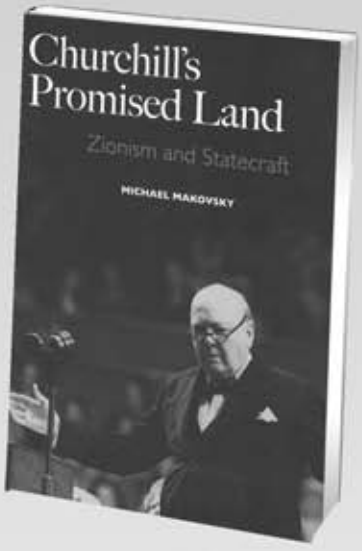

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20,000 to 40,000 troops)." This estimate of what a training and support mission would require was echoed in interviews with a State Department official and two military sources—who requested anonymity—when asked what kind of American presence they foresaw in Iraq following 2011.

McCaffrey's reasoning rests in part on his view of the Iraqi military, an institution he says has vastly improved yet still needs mentoring, equipment, and support from Americans on the ground. In his report, McCaffrey writes that Iraq's border-control service is "anemic" and that the army cannot currently conduct military operations without U.S. support and equipment. "The confidence of the Iraqi combat force is still dependant on US mentoring and backup," he writes. "Their officers are very explicit on this point—THE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES DO NOT WANT THE U.S. COMBAT UNITS TO LEAVE—YET." The capital letters are McCaffrey's.

Backing up McCaffrey's assessment is the fact that Iraq's military has requested everything from U.S. surveillance equipment to F-16 fighter jets. With U.S hardware also comes U.S. training. "It is extremely important that the Iraqis have made it clear they want to purchase Western military systems and particularly American military systems," Fred Kagan, a scholar at the American Enterprise Institute who helped craft the surge strategy in 2006, says. Such purchases, Kagan explains, "impl[y] an expectation of a certain kind of relationship with the supplier. There are upgrades and replacements over time. When you have people training your soldiers on how to use the equipment, how to upgrade it, how to work it into their doctrine, who are those trainers going to be? It is a below-the-line statement of alignment."

As Crocker acknowledged in Baghdad last month at the signing ceremony of the SOFA, the occasion "reminds us that, at a time when United States forces will continue to withdraw from Iraq in recognition of superlative security gains … our relationship will continue to develop in many other ways."

THERE IS other evidence that the United States may keep a significant force in Iraq for a while—and it's built right into the structure of the SOFA itself. In its current state, the SOFA appears to be firm on the withdrawal of troops. But, even now, the document does allow for individual basing agreements to be negotiated by a "Joint Military Operations Coordination Committee" (JMOCC). The JMOCC, according to American and Iraqi officials interviewed for this article, will give provincial authorities a major role in negotiating the leases of bases in their areas. The fact that the Iraq agreement does not establish the terms of these leases (unlike nearly every other SOFA America has signed with countries from Uzbekistan to Germany) strongly indicates that the agreement will be amended down the line.

What's more, both the Kurds and Sunni Arabs in western Iraq, where the Al Assad Airbase is located, are likely to facilitate a U.S. military presence for a long time. A Washington representative for the Kurdistan Regional Government, Qubad Talabani, whose father Jalal is president of Iraq, told me last week, "As Kurdish leaders have said in the past, American forces will always be welcome in the Kurdistan region, and we look forward to working with our American friends within the framework of this law to discuss America's long-term presence in our region." Far from booting U.S. forces out of the country, he believes that the SOFA "gives America the legal cover for expanding their already good relations with Iraqi security institutions." And the influential Sunni leader Sheik Ahmad Rishawi, head of the Anbar Awakening, told me in an interview in June that he had hoped a long-term treaty with America would be based on "mutual friendship" and compared the future SOFA to similar accords struck with postwar Japan and Germany, where American troops are garrisoned to this day. The committees established in the new agreement are expected to be the

OUT OF POCKET *By* **LAURIE ROSENWALD**

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vehicles by which Sunni Arabs and Kurds negotiate longer-term leases for the U.S. bases in their respective areas.

There is even wiggle room on the question of the June 30, 2009, deadline for U.S. "combat forces" to return to their bases. Most of the nearly 150,000 troops in Iraq today are classified as combat troops, but, as the United States transitions to its new role in Iraq, the troops that stay on will likely remain embedded with Iraqi troops but be reclassified as "support troops," even though their function will remain the same. Three military officials told me this week that, already, the Military Transition Teams (MiTT)—the special units deployed to mentor Iraqi battalions for the surge—currently classified as "combat units" are being redesignated as "support units," as are the force-protection and quick-reaction forces, in order to skirt the language of the SOFA. "It's a species of magic," one Pentagon official says. "After a period of time, the MiTT teams will all become support troops."

Even the agreement's language prohibiting attacks by U.S. forces from Iraq on its neighbors would not address secret special operations missions, such as the raid last month into Syria on an Al Qaeda compound over the border. These raids take place even now, notes Kagan, when the existing U.N. Security Council resolution, which authorized the U.S. presence in Iraq, does not permit attacks from Iraq into the territory of its neighbors. "It remains the case the Iraqis would have to decide whether they wanted to know about it or not, or whether they wanted to stop it. None of this is affected by the SOFA," he says. One military source puts it this way: "No agreement would ever put in writing an explicit permission to conduct black operations in neighboring countries. This is not something that is ever done."

What the SOFA does do, however, is establish the political legitimacy of American troops in Iraq for the next three years and provides a framework beyond that. It is perhaps for this reason that the remnants of Moqtada Al Sadr's organization have protested the agreement, as have more and more of the hard-line clerics in Iran. And it is for the same reason that the antiwar crowd is worried: The SOFA clearly ends any legitimate claim that America's presence in Iraq is an occupation at all. From the looks of it, the end of the war and the beginning of a long-term friendship look very much the same.

ELI LAKE

Eli Lake is a contributing editor to the magazine.

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Old School

Obama's union-loving education guru.

IN NOVEMBER, Barack Obama bewildered education reformers by tapping Linda Darling-Hammond, a Stanford professor who had advised his campaign, to oversee the transition's education policy team. Their verdict was swift and harsh. "Worst case scenario," wrote Mike Petrilli, vice president for national programs and policy at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, an education think tank, the day after *The Wall Street Journal* leaked the news. "This is a sign that the president-elect isn't a bona fide reformer," he later told me. Kate Walsh, president of the National Council on Teacher Quality, confirmed, "The reform community is scared to death."

The "reform community" is an aggressive group of education advocates who argue that the certification programs which produce teachers, and the unions that represent them once they're in the classroom, have had too tight a grip on progressive priorities in the field for too long. Instead, they want to shake up the system through programs that bring in new blood and hold teachers accountable. They place their hopes in nervy, pioneering leaders like Michelle Rhee and Joel Klein, the chancellors of the D.C. and New York City public schools, respectively. In Darling-Hammond—an academic, union favorite, and vocal critic of Teach for America and No Child Left Behind—they see the opposite: an ideological enemy representative of a sluggish status quo.

Reformers are right to be nervous. During the campaign, Obama deftly appeased all sides of the policy debate. While appealing to the unions, which have long been bastions of Democratic support, he also gave great hope to reformers inside and outside the party by supporting merit pay and pledging to increase funding for charter schools. In asking Darling-Hammond to helm the transition—a precursor, some worry, to her appointment as secretary of education—Obama has suggested that he wasn't entirely serious about change, at least when it comes to education. It's a misstep that threatens to derail his quest for post-partisanship—and ruin a critical opportunity to revolutionize America's lagging schools.

DARLING-HAMMOND first roiled the reform community—largely a young, fervent crowd—in the early 1990s, when she emerged as the toughest critic of Teach for America (TFA), a program started by Princeton graduate Wendy Kopp to draw some of the nation's top college students into teaching. Darling-Hammond, a former public school teacher, is a staunch advocate of bolstering teacher-certification programs. TFA teachers, by contrast, aren't required to have a teaching degree before they serve two-year stints in some of the country's poorest school districts. "TFA is bad policy and bad education," Darling-Hammond wrote in a 1994 article.

Linda Darling-Hammond is leading the education policy team for Barack Obama's transition.

Today, TFA is one of the reform movement's prized accomplishments. It boasts 20,000 current teachers and alums, many of whom, like Michelle Rhee, have gone on to become leaders in the field. Darling-Hammond has softened her criticism, but, in an education debate this fall, she told a McCain adviser that TFA isn't a program that "builds your profession." She's also published studies showing that teacher certification is critical to improving students' performance, even as other research showed the opposite. "She's either dishonest or the sloppiest person in education research I've ever seen," says Vanderbilt education professor Dale Ballou, who co-wrote a 2000 report criticizing a teacher-certification study spearheaded by Darling-Hammond. (She fired back at the time, saying Ballou's report "ignores and misconstrues" the evidence.) And, in January 2007, she proposed a "Marshall Plan for Teaching," a $3 billion agenda for improving training and certification programs and diminishing the "parade of underprepared and inexperienced teachers" in public schools.

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Darling-Hammond has also gone after No Child Left Behind (NCLB), which reformers see as a flawed but important bipartisan law that calls for raising accountability standards, enhancing student testing requirements, and closing the achievement gap among students of differing racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. In a May 2007 article in *The Nation*, she wrote that the country needs "something much more than [NCLB] and much different." Last fall, she penned an op-ed criticizing high-stakes testing, a measure many reformers support. It didn't help that, during the campaign, she signed an education manifesto at odds with a rival, tough-minded reform agenda. (Both documents were circulated and hotly debated at the Democratic convention this year.) "The ideas associated with Darling-Hammond are ones that educators love because they're warm and fuzzy," says Petrilli of the Fordham Institute. "They're not tough, not admitting that sometimes adults aren't doing their jobs."

On the trail, Obama managed to win over both camps. He satisfied the unions by working with Darling-Hammond, yet drew boos at one union meeting by praising merit pay. At an American Enterprise Institute forum in early October, Obama education adviser Michael Johnston, a former TFA teacher, assured a nervous crowd that Darling-Hammond's opinion was just one among many in the campaign and pointed to a speech in which Obama proposed doubling federal spending on charter schools as emblematic of his real views. And, just before the election, Obama publicly praised Rhee, who is at war with the D.C. teachers' union over tenure. "Obama was careful during the campaign to assure both sides he was with them, with a wink, wink and a nod, nod," says Petrilli.

The winking and nodding paid off. Despite nagging misgivings, the reform community threw its support to Obama. But reformers grew worried when he selected Darling-Hammond for the transition. "What's disappointing is the fact that Darling-Hammond is a staunch opponent of TFA and other alternative programs," Rhee says. "We get many of our best teachers through those routes. Somebody who's coming into this with thoughts about shutting those down is extremely problematic." They became even more nervous when Darling-Hammond appeared on short lists for education secretary, along with more reform-friendly types like Joel Klein and Arne Duncan of Chicago Public Schools. "Since Darling-Hammond surfaced as officially on the policy team, there have been a lot of people e-mailing asking, 'What should we do, should we be talking more about our reservations?'" says Joe Williams, executive director of Democrats for Education Reform. TFA declined to comment on Darling-Hammond's appointment, but, in late November, it sent an e-mail to alumni encouraging them to "stay on top of about [sic] what is happening and not happening regarding education reform" and directing them to the website of its political arm, where photos of Darling-Hammond and Joel Klein are captioned with a reminder that the Democratic factional debate is "spilling over into a battle over Secretary of Education."

Reformers are quick to say that, while they disagree strongly with her methods, they don't doubt that Darling-Hammond wants to improve schools. And she does have significant support within the education establishment. "Her approach works," says Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, one of the nation's largest teachers' unions. "She's been involved in education reform since before a lot of these newcomers." Ash Vasudeva, who works with Darling-Hammond at Stanford, says she's "a passionate advocate of the teaching profession." More than 2,500 people have signed an online petition pushing for her Cabinet appointment.

Darling-Hammond also insisted, in a lengthy e-mail, that her positions promote reform. "I don't care who is for and who is against an idea, what matters is whether the idea will improve education for children," she wrote. She said that her opinions are "really not an issue" because the transition team is charged with "figur[ing] out how to implement the policy platform already developed by the Obama campaign."

That may be, but, with Darling-Hammond as the point person on deciding how to implement the most important pieces of an undoubtedly evolving platform, it's easy to imagine reform-backed proposals falling by the wayside. That's why, even if she does not secure a position in the Obama administration, the symbolism and influence she has in this preliminary stage are troubling. Vexing education's boldest change agents won't help Obama substantiate his still-murky education reform credentials and forge bipartisan policies. And, if Obama does elevate her to his Cabinet, the appointment would leave lasting wounds, both among reformers and in the nation's schools. "Hopes would be dashed . . . if [the secretary of Education] isn't reformed-minded," Williams says.

In *The Audacity of Hope*, Obama wrote that "ideological battles [in education] . . . are as outdated as they are predictable." Too bad he's just started another one.

Seyward Darby

Transformers

How peddlers of sleaze became fonts of expertise.

Trent Lott is tired of being stereotyped. It's two weeks after the election, and Lott is at a Marriott hotel in Washington, D.C., in order to address the annual forum of the American League of Lobbyists. The profession, of course, took a beating from both presidential candidates during the campaign that just finished. "This year was extremely tough," laments Dave Wenhold, the group's incoming president. "We're worn down, and they've been slapping us around, . . . and many lobbyists won't speak up for themselves." But Trent Lott will. The former Senate majority leader—and current head of a lobbying firm he started with fellow ex-senator John Breaux—is here to do some consciousness-raising. "I was told, in this new life, what you do is keep your mouth shut and lay low," Lott is telling the crowd. "But I was highly offended by what Congress and the campaign were saying, and I wanted to step up and speak up." As his speech wears on, Lott seems to warm to his role as the Harvey Milk of lobbyists. "Ethics lobbying reform—what a disgrace," he declares. Later, unveiling a gigantic photo of the First Amendment on the stage, he points to the section that describes the right to petition and proceeds to quote James Madison's treatise on organized factions. Lobbyists, he explains, are democracy's conduits of information. "They can represent children, environmental groups, shrimpers, nurses—you name it!"

Lott is not the only lobbyist who is refusing to be embarrassed by his professional identity. "I was giving a speech once, and I was introduced as a 'government relations consultant,'" says one speaker at the meeting, Doug Bennett. "I told him, 'I'm a lobbyist!' and then he said, 'You want me to say that in front of all of these people?' It's ridiculous. We should not be ashamed of what we do." Another speaker, Linda Dooley, put

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it this way: "I yearn for the day that my lobbyist friends can look their mothers in the eye and say, 'I am a lobbyist,' without having to explain anything."

If the American League of Lobbyists has its way, that day will come sooner rather than later. With a reform-minded president arriving in town and promising to limit their sway (earlier this year, Obama described Washington as "a place where good ideas go to die . . . because lobbyists crush them with their money and their influence"), lobbyists are desperate for a speedy makeover. Bolstering their own sense of self-worth is helpful, of course, but it is merely a start. Lobbyists now find themselves engaged in a frenetic bid to convince official Washington that, far from being the greedy corporate hucksters of popular imagination, they are actually a misunderstood band of idealists and wonks.

In truth, this effort at rebranding began not on November 4 but rather two years ago, when Democrats retook Congress. During the heyday of the Bush administration and the Republican majority on the Hill, industry lobbyists found natural allies in government. Already in ideological harmony with the politicians they were trying to influence, corporate lobbyists didn't need to make a case so much as nurture a mutually beneficial relationship. Hence the lavish courtship rituals of someone like Jack Abramoff.

That started to change after November 2006. Because of the ideological divide separating lobbyists from many Democrats, the former were now more likely to resort to actual arguments in the hope of advancing their agendas. This—combined with new restrictions enacted by the Democratic majority on what lobbyists could buy for Hill staffers and congressmen—meant that lobbyists suddenly found it more advantageous to portray themselves as serious policy nerds than as backslapping corporate lackeys. One lobbyist, formerly a senior Democratic Hill staffer, describes how lobbyists no longer feel like they're paying a social visit when they meet with legislative aides: "It's like being an advocate before a judge, instead of a schmoozer and a friend."

It was during this transition that Rick Kessler, a top Democratic aide, was recruited to join a bipartisan lobbying firm that specializes in telecom, energy, and environmental policy. The former chief of staff to House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman John Dingell, Kessler is as fluent in the intricacies of carbon-capture technology as any energy wonk now on the Hill. And he is emblematic of the kind of lobbyist that is currently in high demand—top-level Democratic staffers who can retool their arguments to fit a hands-on governing agenda. "The 'wine, dine, and whine about an issue' lobbying is gone," says Kessler, now president of Dow Lohnes Government Strategies. His firm is closely monitoring the effect of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative on East Coast utility companies, the development of the national electric grid, and the support of cap-and-trade legislation by some of the country's leading natural-gas companies. "We're very policy-oriented people," he says. "And we are suited for the future."

There's no doubt that access and relationships continue to matter. Still, with Obama promising major investments in energy and health care, among other areas, many lobbying shops are newly eager to cast themselves as repositories of the kind of expertise necessary to make ambitious government programs work.

This is, first and foremost, a clever means of improving their damaged standing with elected officials. While it may be a bit of a stretch to think that Obama will treat K Street like a giant policy shop, lobbyists are scrambling to give the impression that they are as conversant in regulatory policy as any liberal think-tank staffer—and, therefore, indispensable to the legislative process. Ironically, Obama's decision to limit the ability of lobbyists to serve in his administration may boost this strategy. "If [lobbyists] cannot serve this transition and the administration in their own areas of expertise," Kessler assures me, then Obama officials are "going to need to consult people on the outside"—that is, lobbyists.

And recasting themselves as policy mavens isn't just a smart way for lobbyists to justify their existence to skeptical politicians. It's also a good way to sell themselves to clients. "Finally, my nerdiness can pay off," says Elizabeth Moeller, a lobbyist at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman. "Many in the renewable-energy sector, for instance, don't want to miss the boat—and they see it as a big boat."

Trent Lott (right), senator turned unapologetic lobbyist, with former colleague Tom Daschle.

ANTHONY RUSSO; AP PHOTO/SUSAN WALSH, FILE

To be sure, the shift in tone from lobbyists doesn't mean the nature of their profession has changed. Lobbying still entails trying to curry favor, and money is still one of the most obvious ways to do that. While Obama wouldn't accept campaign contributions from lobbyists, plenty of other politicians do—and lobbyists aren't about to stop donating. In fact, according to the Center for Responsive Politics, they gave more in this election cycle than they've ever given before. Plus, even as the ethics rules enacted by Democrats encourage some lobbyists to burnish their geek credentials, those same rules have also—by limiting what lobbyists can do to woo lawmakers—heightened the value of insider connections.

At the same time, it's clear that a self-consciously earnest brand of wonkishness is now in vogue on K Street. True, it may just be a new means to the same old end. But it does, at the very least, give the whole enterprise a slightly more respectable feel. And, for lobbyists who have gotten used to hearing their profession disparaged as a matter of political routine, that may be reason enough to have a little more pride the next time they look their mothers in the eye.

Suzy Khimm

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Bibi's Blunders

Netanyahu: not so good for the Jews, either.

In October, when Tzipi Livni, who had won the race to succeed outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as head of Israel's ruling Kadima Party, announced that she was unable to form a governing coalition, you could almost hear the groans coming from across the Atlantic and from European capitals. The reason? Livni's failure to assemble a government means new elections will take place in February. And, if the polls are any guide, that means the Israeli political moment the international community has been fearing for years could be just around the corner: The dreaded Bibi Netanyahu may soon be back in power.

It's possible that no Israeli leader has ever been reviled so intensely in the West. When Netanyahu was booted from office by Ehud Barak back in 1999, Clinton officials were elated. The administration "has made little effort to conceal its interest in a victory for Ehud Barak," explained *The New York Times* on the day Israeli voters went to the polls. Netanyahu aide David Bar-Illan would later write of a "massive American intervention" intended to help Barak oust Bibi. James Carville, Robert Shrum, and Stanley Greenberg—Clinton advisers all—worked for Barak's campaign. "Dislike is not a strong enough word," an acquaintance of then–Secretary of State Madeleine Albright once told me. "She hated him." Bill Clinton himself made his feelings clear in a meeting ten years ago with Shimon Peres, now Israel's president, when he reportedly said that he had lost confidence in Netanyahu.

A decade later, Bibi still has plenty of detractors in D.C. Netanyahu, editorialized *The Washington Post* last month, "is seen as inflexible and untrustworthy by many in Washington; his election could spell a fractious period in Israeli-U.S. relations." Indeed, Barack Obama has had unkind words for Netanyahu's party, telling a group of Jewish leaders back in February that "there is a strain within the pro-Israel community that says unless you adopt an unwavering pro-Likud approach to Israel that you're anti-Israel—and that can't be the measure of our friendship with Israel."

And, whatever the feelings of American politicians toward Bibi, they are mild compared to the disdain directed at him from European capitals, where the name Netanyahu can generally be counted on to elicit a grimace or a sneer. German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder once described Bibi's ideas as "weird," while French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine—explaining in 1998 why his country decided to hold peace talks without Israel—said, "You can't have a peace summit with Netanyahu."

The source of all this scorn is simple: Westerners blamed Bibi for trying to torpedo the peace process in the late '90s—and many believe he will do so again today. The truth, however, is that, when it came to foreign policy, Netanyahu was always considerably more pragmatic than Americans and Europeans gave him credit for. He talked tough but relented time and again. Through Ronald Lauder, his emissary to President Hafez Assad of Syria, Netanyahu affirmed his willingness to give up the Golan Heights in exchange for peace. He may have kicked and screamed during the Wye River negotiations in 1998, but, in the end, he acquiesced—ensuring that the Oslo process moved forward. Bibi, wrote Robert Satloff of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy at the time, has put the "final nail in the coffin to a claim by any major Israeli political party to 'all the land of Israel.'"

What's more, history has been kinder to some of Bibi's stances than many in the West would like to admit. His reluctance to view Yasir Arafat as a credible partner for peace was vindicated in 2000 when Arafat launched the second intifada, while his objection to Ariel Sharon's withdrawal from Gaza three years ago does not, in retrospect, seem quite so preposterous now that the territory has been taken over by Hamas.

Today, the practical distinctions between Netanyahu and his rivals on foreign policy are marginal at best. As the far-left Israeli columnist Gideon Levy has written, Bibi is "no worse than his fellow candidates, but immeasurably more persecuted." Of course, the three main contenders for prime minister—Netanyahu,

David Cowles

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Livni, and Barak—tend to play up their differences in order to distinguish themselves in voters' minds. But, in contrast to the 1990s when voters were sharply divided over Oslo, Israeli society has arrived at a remarkably coherent consensus on the peace process. Israelis are generally skeptical about the prospects for peace but are willing to play along in a cautious game of trial and error. It's pretty clear that, no matter who wins the upcoming election, the next prime minister will end up roughly carrying out the overwhelming popular desire for cautious pragmatism in negotiations with the Palestinians. As for the question of what to do about Iran's nuclear program, all three candidates agree that it's dangerous and needs to be stopped. Barak and Livni are hardly soft on Iran. Barak has had tough words on the subject: "It is our responsibility to ensure that the right steps are taken against the Iranian regime," he said a year ago. "As is well-known, words don't stop missiles." And, when Livni was recently asked if she supported discussions between the United States and Iran, her reply was blunt: "The answer is no."

And yet there *are* perfectly good reasons to be wary of Netanyahu—just not the reasons Americans and Europeans have generally fixated on when carping about Bibi over the years. A good number of Israelis are dreading Netanyahu's return to power, but their dread has less to do with Bibi's stance toward Palestinians, Syrians, or Iranians—and much more to do with how he has treated his fellow citizens. Netanyahu's first stint in office suffered from plenty of problems—he was disorganized and "prone to panic," as Ariel Sharon once said about him—but the biggest flaw was that Bibi was a divider, not a uniter. If this doesn't change, he will once again be a failed prime minister.

During the late '90s, Bibi essentially managed to alienate half of Israel. At a time when a sense of unity was essential—following Yitzhak Rabin's assassination—Netanyahu encouraged the right to hate the left and shamelessly exploited the country's divide between religious and secular. (He was once caught on tape whispering to a notorious rabbi that "they"—namely, everybody to the left of him—"forgot how to be Jews.") Worst of all, however, was his constant denunciation of elites, rhetoric that, in retrospect, makes him sound like an Israeli Sarah Palin. "We all know," Netanyahu once said, "that there's a small group here that's snobbish and arrogant." In May 1999, he told voters in the Tikvah market in Tel Aviv that "those elites, what's known as the elites, hate the people. They hate anyone who isn't them. They hate the Sephardim, the Russians, the Ethiopians. Anyone who isn't one of them."

Bibi lacked the wisdom of another Likud leader, Ariel Sharon, who realized in his second stint as prime minister that, to be a successful leader in Israel, one has to rule from the center—because of both the parliamentary political system (which requires holding together fractious coalitions of small parties) and the political culture (an Israeli prime minister frequently faces the kind of tough national security decisions that require broad agreement among the citizenry). Either Netanyahu didn't understand this, or he was unable to pick his fights wisely and selectively. As a result, he came to be viewed as the hostage of right-wing hacks and ultra-Orthodox parties. He had a coalition—but it was a coalition of angry minorities.

In politics, image can be everything, and, if Netanyahu wants to be a successful prime minister, he will have to change his. He will have to prove that he can be more cool-headed. He will need to find a way to recapture the confidence of the many Israelis who were hurt by the economic measures he promoted as a very successful, but also very conservative, finance minister. And, through his rhetoric, he will need to convince the center that he has learned his lesson and is ready to be the leader of all Israelis—just as Sharon did, after a decade and a half in the political desert.

If Bibi does win—and if, as seems likely no matter who occupies the prime minister's seat, progress toward peace continues to move at a less-than-swift pace—Americans and Europeans will invariably blame him. This will be largely unfair (Barak failed at Camp David, Sharon failed in Gaza, and Olmert failed at Annapolis), but it will also be convenient. Someone has to be blamed in such situations, after all, and the options are limited: Obama can't be blamed (he is too new), blaming the Palestinian president is boring (he is too weak), and blaming Arab leaders is useless (no one expects them to do anything anyway).

Most Israelis, by contrast, will know better than to fault Bibi if the peace process once again stalls. When it comes to his habit of governing by demagoguery and division, however, they may not be so forgiving. *Shmuel Rosner*

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Status Woe

Climbing the social ladder in Obama's Washington.

MICHELLE COTTLE

What does it take to get tagged as a shameless status-seeker in a town fueled by the eternal quest for access to power? Ask Beth Dozoretz, the former Democratic National Committee finance chair with a legendary affinity for snuggling up to the rich and powerful. (She asked pal Bill Clinton to be godfather to her now-ten-year-old daughter, Melanne.) It seems that, in the waning days of the presidential race, Dozoretz found herself at a dinner party with Michelle Obama. Not one to miss an opportunity, Dozoretz slipped Mrs. Obama a note from Melanne, in which the precocious fourth grader urged the Obamas to enroll their two girls, Malia and Sasha, at D.C.'s prestigious Sidwell Friends School. Shortly after Election Day, she and her husband, health care mogul Ron Dozoretz, popped up in the press talking about the note-passing and elaborating on their pro-Sidwell lobbying. All across Northwest D.C., tongues set to clucking: *Tacky! Shameless! How could they be so out there?* It wasn't so much that the Dozoretzes had attempted to cement a connection with the new First Family via their daughter's school. After all, veterans of establishment Washington understand that ingratiating oneself with a new commander-in-chief can require aggressive p.r. as well as exceedingly pointy elbows. Said veterans, however, prefer that the scramble be conducted without the vulgar details spilling out into public view. The sense that the Dozoretzes were publicly *boasting* of their sucking up was deemed downright embarrassing, prompting some observers to express disappointment that such a naked status grab didn't prompt the Obamas to send their girls elsewhere. "I thought it might have been a turnoff," says the disgusted father of a child at another elite school.

The Beltway scramble for a piece of presidential prestige has begun, with all of the plotting, jockeying, and backbiting of a small-town beauty pageant. To some degree, the ritual is both unavoidable and understandable. Establishment Washington is an insecure culture, peopled by frantic overachievers whose professional and social standing depends heavily and uneasily on the ballot box: Which party holds power impacts the fortunes of a broad swath of the Beltway, from lobbyists and their clients to think-tank nerds, from charity fundraisers to restaurateurs. Then, every four or eight years, the social structure is upended as a new family moves into the White House. Titles are reapportioned. Seating charts are redrawn. A-listers can find themselves slipping with an alarming lack of friction down the sociopolitical totem pole they fought so hard to climb. Washington's gravitational tug toward a constantly shifting power center keeps the players in a state of perpetual flux.

That said, there is a new intensity to this season's shuffle, driven in part by the outsized expectations attending the incoming president, and in part by the pent-up demand generated by eight years with the departing president, who made it clear from day one that he hated Washington. With change now heavy in the air, across the Beltway hangs a sense of promise—along with a fierce determination not to miss out on the action. Local ministers are issuing invitations for the First Family to join their flocks, while veteran hostesses sidle up to Obama advisers with visions of get-togethers with a commander-in-chief who doesn't go to bed around nine p.m. each night. Even some of the opposition is reaching out: In her chat with an Obama adviser, Republican lobbyist and superhostess Juleanna Glover, known for her studiously bipartisan soirees, was given encouragement that key players in the new administration (perhaps even the First Couple) would be open to her social advances. (From Glover's perspective, it's about damn time: "These formal seated state dinners are very much an anachronism," she insists. "They are not a real means of building communication among powerful individuals in this city.") Charity organizers looking for some presidential juice for their causes are advised to make nice with longtime Obama consigliere and soon-to-be White House senior adviser Valerie Jarrett. ("She's *not* going to be a soft sell," cautions one organizer, knowingly.) And, of course, every well-connected parent with young children is fantasizing about birthday parties on the White House lawn. (Never has childlessness been considered such an impediment to advancement around these parts.)

Unsurprisingly, the loudest whoops of joy are coming from the liberal pockets of town, where exiled Dems will soon feel the warmth of the political sun once more. Don't look for the Obama troops to buy into the tony Republican enclaves of McLean and Great Falls, Virginia; Maryland's Montgomery County and Northwest D.C. neighborhoods like Spring Valley and Cleveland Park are back in vogue. Junior Obama staffers are flocking (or, in some cases, returning) to Adams Morgan and Dupont Circle. "As people figure out where they're going to live, we're recognizing that we're ending up in same general area," enthuses one young Obama staffer. "It's like one big spread-out dorm!" And one Obama insider reports that some of the more senior folks have taken a shine to the traditional Democratic power center of Georgetown. ("I'm told that people have got real-estate agents all over Georgetown, crawling around looking for houses," confirms journalist Sally Quinn, one of the neighborhood's most socially prominent inhabitants.) That said, expect the spotlight to shift away from the Georgetown watering holes frequented by young Republicans (including Bush-twin favorite Smith Point). The new energy will be several blocks farther east, in the funkier environs of Adams Morgan and along the still-gentrifying U Street corridor, where the Busboys and Poets flagship dishes up comfort food to young progressives.

Democrats' giddy anticipation has its downside, of course, as they fall victim to what one prominent journalist dubbed "status trauma"—the fear that someone you know is going to wind up more a part of the new in-crowd than you. Ironically, this phenomenon tends to be more vivid when supposedly high-minded progressives assume control—in part because there's a much higher concentration of Dems than Republicans in the

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city proper, and in part because the establishment is padded with a sizeable number of media elites (who, let's face it, trend more left than right). Sally Quinn, arguably the grande dame of establishment society, is more emphatic in her views: "You've got Democrats as the reigning inhabitants, and so it's when the Democrats come in that the hysteria and tension and craziness and climbing and scratching and clawing take over," she says. "That's when you start climbing over friends' backs to get close to power. Then things get really ugly and really hostile because best friends are turning on each other." The recent private-school scramble certainly provoked much sniping and sneering among local parents (even discounting the Dozoretzes). It was remarkable how naked the status anxiety became at all the schools under consideration, recalls one dad from Georgetown Day School (a runner-up in the First *filles* sweepstakes). Parents would just chatter away, he recalls, about " 'Oh my God, wouldn't it be just amazing if'—their daughter, fill in the blank, Zoe or Chloe or whatever—'wouldn't it be *amazing* if they had a sleepover at the White House!' Then they'd envision themselves having to pick up their child and telling people, 'Oh, I've got to go over to the White House!' " He harrumphs, "People would actually say this stuff out loud. It was just embarrassing."

Complicating matters, much of the town's political class hasn't yet figured out how to get onto the new First Family's radar. "I don't know *anyone* who knows them really well," says Quinn. "Remember, even when Barack was in the Senate, he wasn't really a part of that culture," notes one Obama friend. Those close to the Obamas stress that they will rely less on traditional D.C. social arbiters and more on people they know well and feel comfortable with—close friends, family, and the family of close friends—to help them adjust. Among the most obvious locals to serve as potential guides are Obama's beloved Harvard buddies Cassandra Butts (until recently a v.p. at the Center for American Progress) and Julius Genachowski (former FCC staffer turned IT venture capitalist). Another prime suspect is family friend Michael Strautmanis, chief counsel in Obama's Senate office and now the transition's Director of Public Liaison and Intergovernmental Affairs. Other names mentioned include Democratic strategist Donna Brazile; D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty and his wife, Michelle; Ann Jordan, wife of power broker Vernon Jordan and a cousin of Valerie Jarrett; and former Clinton official turned p.r. maven Ann Walker Marchant, another Jarrett cousin. (Jarrett arrives with an extensive network of cousins, aunts, and uncles in place.) And there's always Eric Holder, Obama's pick for attorney general. In addition to being an old Washington hand himself, Holder's wife, Sharon Malone, is a popular local doctor.

Obama intimates have only exacerbated the anxiety and confusion by stressing that the incoming First Couple, like the city they hail from, isn't single-mindedly political—a foreign concept for many Washingtonians. Many of the Obamas' friends are in other lines of work, and the conversation at weekend barbecues and potlucks tends to revolve around other subjects, such as kids or sports. The president-elect is a "SportsCenter" junkie who delights in talking—or, more precisely, arguing—about basketball in particular. (Warning: Like any good debater, he comes armed with stats to support his positions.) Obama and bosom buddies Marty Nesbitt, a Chicago entrepreneur, and Eric Whitaker, a physician and associate dean at the University of Chicago Medical Center, can "sit there and talk about the latest basketball game ad nauseum," laughs Valerie Jarrett. "That's fine with me. If I get really bored, I'll leave." Movies are another conversational go-to. "Barack's a big movie buff," one friend says. "The next time you talk to him, ask him to analyze the Senate in terms of *The Godfather*. He will go on and on about it." Notes the friend, "The Obamas and their people aren't that into the world of politics as the only world that you live in, so that all the people you go to cocktail parties with and have dinner with are reporters and people in the administration. Sitting around talking about politics when socializing with [the Obamas'] crowd is frowned upon."

Some residents cheer this as a long-needed change. "Washington isn't just a government town," insists Ann Walker Marchant, a proud D.C. native who introduced the president-elect to Eric Holder at a small dinner party at her house in 2004. It would be a boon to the capital's civic health, says Marchant, if Obama would look beyond political Washington to the D.C. of "lawyers, doctors, engineers, architects, a different side of Washington than a lot of people ever see," and help create "a city that's totally integrated with the administration."

This, of course, is the enduring dream of D.C. locals. For decades, the approach of a new president—particularly a Democratic one—has sparked optimism that the First Family will make an effort to become a part of the community. Members of Democratic administrations are considered more likely to settle, socialize, and patronize businesses and institutions within Washington rather than in the suburbs. And hope springs eternal that someday, some president will take an interest in the crime-ridden neighborhoods that make up the grittier half of the oft-discussed "two Washingtons." In its recent "Welcome to Town" editorial, *The Washington Post* cheered the Obamas' "pledge to become true Washingtonians," plaintively noting that "[s]ome presidents have feinted in this direction and then quickly lost interest; others have made no secret of the fact that they'd rather be living in, say, Texas."

In this area (as in so many), Obama is being talked about as an especially promising unifier. As Attorney General-to-be Holder notes, "You have a president who brings with him a whole group of people who understand the urban environment. These are folks who live in, prosper in, and love cities."

But simply by being themselves—young, charismatic, cosmopolitan—the Obamas are expected to give the capital a jolt. Washington old-timers and Obama insiders alike are predicting an urban renaissance of sorts. "There's a glamour about Barack and Michelle that I think will infuse the capital in a way that we have not seen for some time," says Holder. "They are both tall, good-looking, striking people with adorable little girls. I can't help but think that's going to have an impact."

Of course, in a town where some 56 percent of the population is black, it doesn't hurt that the soon-to-be First Family shares that racial designation. "I think the African American culture of D.C. is going to explode," says an Obama insider, who adds with a laugh, "I have already had conversations with three single women who don't live here but are thinking about moving to Washington because they think the place is going to be overrun with eligible professional single black men." Says Holder, "My guess is that this White House will be a magnet for all things African American. Whether it's politics or the arts, this is going to be the place to be. If you don't believe it," he chuckles, "wait until you see the inaugural."

Better start working on your tickets to the festivities, Establishment Washington. Wouldn't want the Dozoretzes to have all the fun. ◆

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Obama vs. Osama

Has he picked the right war?

MICHAEL CROWLEY

British forces were technologically superior, but they were still defeated by Afghan tribesmen in the 1880 Battle of Maiwand.

MANSELL/TIME & LIFE PICTURES/GETTY IMAGES

AROUND THE TIME of the November election, John Nagl, a retired Army Colonel, took a helicopter ride across Afghanistan. What he saw below worried him. Nagl, who is 42 with trim brown hair and academic eyeglasses, spent three years in Iraq, including as part of a tank battalion in the Sunni Triangle, where he witnessed brutal combat in the war's worst years. A West Point graduate and Rhodes Scholar, Nagl applied the lessons of his Iraq experience to the Army-Marine Counterinsurgency Field Manual, which he helped write and which was published last year. He currently specializes in the study of war and counterinsurgency at the Center for a New American Security, a center-left Washington think tank, and it is in this capacity that he recently traveled to the Afghan war zone. As his military chopper swooped over high mountain ridges and plunging valleys, he grimly surveyed the size and the inhospitality of the Afghan terrain. Winning in Afghanistan, he realized, would take more than "a little tweak," as he put it to me from back in Washington a few weeks later, when he was still shaking off the gritty "Kabul crud" that afflicts traveler's lungs. It would take time, money, and blood. "It's a doubling of the U.S. commitment," Nagl said. "It's a doubling of the Afghan army, maybe a tripling. It's going to require a tax increase and a bigger army."

For the left in the Bush era, America's two wars have long been divided into the good and the bad. Iraq was the moral and strategic catastrophe, while Afghanistan—home base for the September 11 attacks—was a righteous fight. This dichotomy was especially appealing to liberals because it allowed them to pair their call for withdrawal from Iraq with a call for escalation in Afghanistan. Leaving Iraq wasn't about retreating; it was about bolstering another front, one where our true strategic interests lie. The left could meet conservative charges of defeatism with the rhetoric of victory. Barack Obama is now getting ready to turn this idea into policy. He has already called for sending an additional two U.S. brigades, or roughly 10,000 troops, to the country and may wind up proposing a much larger escalation in what candidate Obama has called "the war we need to win."

But, as Nagl understands at the ground level, winning in Afghanistan will take more than just shifting a couple of brigades from the bad war to the good one. Securing Afghanistan—and preserving a government and society we can be proud of—is vastly more challenging than the rhetoric of the campaign has

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suggested. Taliban fighters are bolder and crueler than ever—beheading dozens of men at a time, blasting the capital with car bombs, killing NATO troops with sniper fire and roadside explosives. Meanwhile, the recent savagery in Mumbai has India and Pakistan at each other's throats again, a development that indirectly benefits Afghan insurgents.

The challenge of exiting Iraq was supposed to be the first great foreign policy test of Obama's presidency. But it is Afghanistan that now looms as the potential quagmire. Winning the good war will, at a minimum, require the most sophisticated counterinsurgency techniques developed by Nagl and his colleagues, which take enormous resources. But, even then, it's not at all clear what victory looks like, or whether it's even possible in a country known as the graveyard of empires. All of which raises the question of how much longer Afghanistan really can be considered the good war.

On November 12, while Nagl was touring Afghanistan, two men on a motorcycle pulled up to a group of teenage schoolgirls in the southern city of Kandahar. Using a child's water pistol, one of the men sprayed three girls in the face—the squirt gun was loaded not with water but with battery acid—leaving them disfigured. The girls' apparent sin was that they were attending school—a violation of the Taliban's medieval *sharia* law.

That America's October 2001 invasion failed to impose peace and stability is not exactly a surprise. Afghanistan is like a Chinese finger trap: The harder you try to solve it, the more it constricts you. Ask the Russians. In 1979, the Soviet Union sent military forces to install a pro-Soviet government in Kabul. At its peak in the country, the Red Army numbered some 140,000. But, after ten years of inconclusive fighting, 15,000 dead, and tens of thousands more wounded, the battered Soviets mounted a humiliating retreat—one that probably helped speed the collapse of their empire. ("They've already repeated all of our mistakes," one former Soviet general from the Afghan campaign recently said to *The New York Times* of the U.S. occupation.) Or ask the British. More than a century earlier, the United Kingdom dispatched a huge army to Afghanistan from India to secure it against Russian influence. That adventure, too, was a disaster, ending in a retreat of 16,500 troops and civilians through the Khyber Pass into Pakistan. Only one survivor made it—his life spared by the Afghans so he could recount the ghastly tale for others.

From the beginning, experts with this historical perspective in mind warned that crushing the Taliban was impossible: "No matter how successful the U.S. campaign is," wrote the Council on Foreign Relations's Kimberly Marten Zisk in November 2001, "never will all the rebels defect to the winning side. The rebels who are left will not stop fighting, no matter how hard conditions get." The past seven years have made those words look prescient. Today, the Taliban is as bold—and as brutal—as it has been since the United States first drove it from power. The Pashtun Islamic radicals who controlled the country from 1996 to 2001, and provided safe harbor to Osama bin Laden before September 11, have found sanctuary and regrouped just across Afghanistan's eastern border, in Pakistan's self-governing northwestern tribal areas.

John Nagl knows something about how to fight insurgencies like this. As a student at West Point, he studied the communist revolt against British occupiers in Malaya in the 1950s and the doomed U.S. adventure in Vietnam. His doctoral thesis was subtitled, "Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife"—a phrase coined by T.E. Lawrence to describe the challenge facing the Ottoman Turks battling Arab rebellions. One of the central points of the counterinsurgency doctrine studied by Nagl is that brute force is counterproductive. "Insurgencies are ultimately defeated not by killing or capturing every insurgent but by changing peoples' minds," he says. That requires the use of economic and political power as well as military force. It also requires manpower. Lots of it. "To defeat an insurgency," he says, "you have to provide security to the population on the ground."

Nagl's rule of thumb, the one found in the counterinsurgency manual, calls for at least a 1-to-50 ratio of security forces to civilians in contested areas. Applied to Afghanistan, which has both a bigger population (32 million) and a larger land mass (647,500 square miles) than Iraq, that gets you to some large numbers fast. Right now, the United States and its allies have some 65,000 troops in Afghanistan, as compared to about 140,000 in Iraq. By Nagl's ratio, Afghanistan's population calls for more than 600,000 security forces. Even adjusting for the relative stability of large swaths of the country, the ideal number could still total around 300,000—more than a quadrupling of current troop levels. Eventually, Afghanistan's national army could shoulder most of that burden. But, right now, those forces number a ragtag 60,000, a figure Nagl believes will need to at least double and maybe triple. Standing up a force of that size, as the example of Iraq has shown us, will take several years and consume billions of U.S. dollars.

For Obama, winning support for such an enterprise won't be simple. Despite the feel-good consensus of the campaign that Afghanistan is a noble, must-win cause, he'll be under pressure from multiple fronts to scale back America's ambitions. American public opinion, for starters, is already beginning to sour on the war. In August, a *USA Today*/Gallup poll found that 34 percent of Americans think the United States "made a mistake" in sending military forces to Afghanistan. That's up nine points from a year ago. (In early 2002, just 6 percent of respondents agreed with that statement.) Another poll, conducted in early September poll by GfK Roper Public Affairs, found that 41 percent oppose sending more troops. And a July ABC News/*Washington Post* poll found that 45 percent believe the war's costs have not been worth its benefits—and, moreover, that defeating global terrorism does not require victory over the Taliban. "People can't quite get back to why we're in Afghanistan," acknowledges Democratic Representative Ellen Tauscher of California, a foreign-affairs specialist who recently visited the country.

Obama may face particular resistance from his left flank. Many liberal doves were never thrilled by the original invasion of Afghanistan but muted their criticism to devote their energies to decrying the Iraq war. But, now that there is consensus that the Iraq war was a mistake, there is growing vocal discontent from these quarters on Afghanistan as well. *The Nation*'s editor, Katrina vanden Heuvel, recently argued, for instance, that "it is troubling" that Obama "continues to talk about escalating the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan." In an essay also published by *The Nation*, Tariq Ali referred to the mission there as "Operation Enduring Disaster."

Nor is the military so gung ho about another long fight with evasive insurgents. A major drawdown from Iraq will theoretically free up the forces for a big escalation in Afghanistan. But, in reality, the military badly needs a rest: "What I see happening is literally every soldier who is withdrawn from Iraq is going to end up in Afghanistan," says Nagl. "And, frankly, the ground forces of our great nation were looking forward to a bit of a break."

Conservative and centrist critics of a calendar-based Iraq withdrawal may

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support that thinking. These people see a zero-sum contest for resources between Iraq and Afghanistan. Their fear—and expectation—is that Iraq is not yet ready to stand on its own, and that a U.S. withdrawal along Obama's stated timeline of roughly 16 months will lead to new instability—requiring a pause in the exit plan. "My fear is that this desire to shift troops over to Afghanistan is going to screw things up in Iraq, and, at the end of the day, Iraq is more important," says Kenneth Pollack of the Brookings Institution.

Finally, some of America's key allies may balk at a greater sacrifice, even for the "good war." While Obamamania swept across Europe this fall, resulting in massive crowds and swooning heads of state, it remains to be seen whether Obama's powers of persuasion can reverse public opinion abroad. According to a mid-November poll, more than two-thirds of Britons want their 8,000 troops out of the country within a year. In August, Al Qaeda killed ten French peacekeepers (four were captured and skinned alive, according to *The Daily Telegraph*). The country's worst military loss in 25 years, the massacre has contributed to majority opposition to the war. In Canada, which supplies about 2,500 troops (and has lost 98 since 2002), one recent poll showed that 59 percent of the population opposes extending its mission beyond 2009.

Clearly, doing counterinsurgency right, in the way that Nagl envisions, will require Obama to make a new and impassioned case for saving Afghanistan. He will have to remind Americans just why it is their sons and daughters are fighting and dying in godforsaken mountain passes and poppy fields. Tauscher hopes Obama can rally the nation around this cause. "I think we're all counting on President-elect Obama's significant oration skills and his vision as commander-in-chief of what's in the American national security interest," she says. But the trouble is that the question of what, exactly, is in the American interest in Afghanistan remains extremely murky.

On May 23, 2005 George W. Bush welcomed Afghanistan's president, Hamid Karzai to Washington. As the two leaders met the press in the White House's East Room, Bush praised his counterpart as a beacon of freedom and democracy. "I am honored to stand by the first democratically elected leader in the five-thousand-year history of Afghanistan. Congratulations," Bush rhapsodized.

Afghanistan earned its status as the "good war" not just because it was a direct response to the September 11 attacks, but because—unlike in Iraq—it quickly produced an affable, Westernized leader who was the product of a democratic process. But times have changed. Public disapproval among Afghans of Karzai's weak and corruption-rife government has doubled in the past year, according to a summer poll by the Asia Foundation. Karzai himself is now viewed as ineffectual, corrupt, or both. His brother has been implicated in heroin trafficking on a massive scale. And, now, the West is considering its alternatives. According to a leaked diplomatic cable recently published by a French newspaper, the British ambassador to Afghanistan has declared the country in "crisis," and thinks the "realistic" solution is the installation of "an acceptable dictator." For many Afghanistan-watchers, such an outcome would be no surprise. "I can only laugh" at Bush's dreams of democracy, says Les Gelb of the Council on Foreign Relations. "It's in our bones as Americans to think that we can democratize those societies. It's a vast cultural ignorance."

Barack Obama may well agree. When talking about the importance of Afghanistan, he does so in strategic, not moral, terms. Gone is Bush's swooning rhetoric of democracy and human rights. To hear Obama tell it, Afghanistan is the "central front" against terrorists, and possibly the place where Osama bin Laden can be found. In July, Obama told a McClatchy reporter that America's goals in the country should be "relatively modest," adding that "[o]ur critical goal should be to make sure that the Taliban and Al Qaeda are routed and that they cannot project threats against us from that region."

But even this "relatively modest" goal necessitates that Obama weigh in on some morally complex—and interrelated—questions. One is whether a weakened Karzai is more of a hindrance to the goal of stamping out insurgents than an asset. With Afghanistan due to hold a national election in late 2009, some regional experts believe that Obama should pull the plug on the increasingly unpopular and ineffective leader. "I think Karzai should get the boot," says Marvin Weinbaum, a regional expert and former Clinton and Bush State Department official now with the Middle East Institute. "As long as he's around, there can't be anything in the way of a fresh start." Even if Obama agrees with this assessment—and judging from the fact that he waited nearly three weeks after the election to speak to Karzai, he may well—he faces the problem of finding a credible alternative.

Another question is whether to strike a deal with the Taliban. Almost everyone who looks hard at Afghanistan concludes that some kind of political settlement will be required to end the stubborn insurgency. General David Petraeus, fresh from his apparent success in Iraq and now commander of Central Command, is shifting his focus to Afghanistan and the question of whether it's possible to negotiate with moderate elements of the Taliban in hopes of replicating something like Iraq's Sunni Awakening, which co-opted Sunni tribes in Anbar province and turned them against Al Qaeda.

Easier said than done. The Sunnis turned against Al Qaeda because they were foreign interlopers—whereas the Taliban are largely drawn from Afghanistan's native Pashtun population. Indeed, when Karzai recently offered safe passage to negotiations for the one-eyed Taliban leader Mullah Omar, he was rewarded with mockery by a Taliban spokesman who said the mullah was plenty safe already and moreover quite pleased with the current state of affairs.

It's also not clear who the United States should be talking *to*. A recent report by the Center for American Progress names six major Islamic insurgent groups fighting in Afghanistan—including not just the Taliban and Al Qaeda but a colorful cast of characters, such as the Islamic movement of Uzbekistan; the so-called "Haqqani Network," which recently tried to kill Karzai; and Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin, followers of the rapacious Afghan warlord and former bin Laden ally Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who once declared that, because a million Afghans had already died in civil wars there, he saw no great problem with another million perishing. The Taliban itself consists of numerous tribally oriented splinter groups with various leaders and motivations—some little more than criminal gangs who may be willing to cooperate with the United States for the right price. But the group's core leadership is not the deal-making kind. "When I was at the State Department, we had some dealings with [the Omar-led Taliban], and it always came down to 'We've got time and Allah on our side,'" says Weinbaum.

If Taliban leaders were to accept a deal, it would probably involve granting them real power. "We have to begin to think about the possibility of the Taliban in some fashion coming back to power," says Gelb. Deterrence—the threat of a massive post-September-11-like retaliation for any terror attack originating from the country—could prevent Al Qaeda from setting up shop again, Gelb argues.

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But could Obama—could the United States—stomach what would be essentially reinstalling the Taliban to power? A central moral element of the "good war" was the liberation of millions of Afghan women subject to the Taliban's harsh *sharia* law, which prevented girls from being educated, chopped off fingers with painted nails, and stoned women for adultery and executed others at midfield of a newly-constructed soccer stadium in front of thousands. Shortly after the fall of the Taliban, in November 2001, Hillary Clinton, soon to be Obama's woman at Foggy Bottom and a key voice in the Afghanistan debate, penned a *Time* essay arguing against the notion that imposing Western values there amounted to "cultural imperialism." "Women's rights are human rights," Clinton wrote. "They are not simply American, or western customs."

Stirring words, to be sure. But the day may come when cutting deals in Afghanistan means consigning some women, if not to the brutal life of the high Taliban era, to strict Islamic rules sure to offend the likes of Hillary Clinton. It may well be, in other words, that America's moral and strategic interests are beginning to diverge in Afghanistan in a way that supporters of the "good war" may not yet appreciate.

SOMETIME AFTER midnight on Saturday, November 22, an unmanned U.S. Predator drone slipped through the skies of Pakistan's North Waziristan province and hovered above the small town of Ali Khel. In an instant, three Hellfire missiles launched from the drone and rocketed at 950 miles per hour into a mud hut below. The explosions that lit up the night sky abruptly ended the life of Rashid Rauf, a British Islamic militant believed to have masterminded the 2006 Al Qaeda plot to blow up several transatlantic airliners. Two other senior Al Qaeda operatives were eliminated along with Rauf.

This was just one of the most successful in a recent series of Predator strikes at Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders in the remote tribal areas along Pakistan's border with Afghanistan. Although the Pakistani government privately winks at (but publicly denounces) the Predator strikes, it keeps these areas off-limits to NATO ground troops. And Pakistani forces have made largely halfhearted and ineffectual efforts to root out the Taliban and Al Qaeda leaders—perhaps including bin Laden himself—who hide in the region's mud houses and mountain caves.

The linchpin of Obama's case for escalating the war in Afghanistan is that, unlike Iraq, it's in our strategic interest. But, the closer you look at that premise, the blurrier it can get. The tale of Rauf's demise illustrates that our strategic interest may best be served by focusing on Pakistan. The inconvenient fact is that, since September 11, Pakistan, and not Afghanistan, has emerged as Al Qaeda's true home. "Al Qaeda isn't in Afghanistan, they're in *Pakistan*," says Kenneth Pollack. Pakistan offers the Taliban sanctuary, which in turn allows Taliban fighters to escape annihilation by NATO forces who can't chase them across the border. Adds Pollack: "It's clear that you cannot solve the problems of Afghanistan without solving Pakistan."

But "solving" Pakistan is an entirely different project than winning in Afghanistan. It is a matter of diplomacy and foreign aid, not large contingents of ground troops. It requires boosting the economy of a country now teetering near bankruptcy. And it entails, as Obama's team has acknowledged, a new push to soothe the extreme tensions between Islamic Pakistan and its Hindu rival, India. Hatred for India foments radicalism on the margins of Pakistani society. And it leads Pakistan's notorious intelligence services to provide support for the Taliban, which it sees as a buffer against creeping Indian influence within Afghanistan. This problem, of course, grew exponentially more confounding once the first shots rang out at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus last week and is unlikely to be solved by more American troops in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, it's quite possible that a major U.S. troop buildup in another Muslim nation is just what Al Qaeda wants. In mid-November, the senior Al Qaeda commander Ayman Al Zawahiri released a message for Barack Obama. In addition to slurring Obama as a "house negro" and gloating over the coming U.S. exit from Iraq, he said that Obama's plan to "pull your troops out of Iraq to send them to Afghanistan is a policy which was destined for failure before it was born." "[R]emember the fate of Bush and [former Pakistani President] Pervez Musharraf, and the fate of the Soviets and British before them. And be aware that the dogs of Afghanistan have found the flesh of your soldiers to be delicious, so send thousands after thousands to them."

Yes, this was the ranting of a deranged terrorist. But, if the United States really does leave Iraq, Al Qaeda will turn Afghanistan into its next recruiting tool. (It's worth remembering that the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan helped establish bin Laden's reputation.) Even among the Afghan people, sending foreign forces might simply have a backlash effect. "We run the risk that our military presence … will gradually turn the Afghan population entirely against us," former national security adviser—and sometime Obama adviser—Zbigniew Brzezinski told the *Financial Times* this summer.

All of this raises the question of whether a major troop escalation is truly worth the costs. According to a recent *Washington Post* report, military planners are debating whether a smaller U.S. contingent, based around Special Forces and military trainers for Afghan security forces, and complemented by Predator drones, can achieve a reduced set of U.S. goals—namely, preventing Al Qaeda from reconstituting.

When I asked John Nagl about such a scenario, he bristled at the thought. Nagl still believes that Afghanistan is a good war for both moral and strategic reasons. "I think that, without a very substantial commitment to the government of Afghanistan, there's a very real chance that the Taliban returns to power there," he says. "I think that would not be good for the stability of the government of Pakistan. And I am personally unwilling to let a regime that throws acid in the faces of little girls who go to school take power."

But just because Afghanistan may be a good war doesn't mean it will be an easy one. Nagl warns that, in order to win, we need to approach the situation there with our eyes wide open. Obama will need to move beyond the rhetoric of the good war to convey to the American public the sacrifice and hard choices of war itself. "If resources are limited," Nagl says, then Obama should "mobilize the country"—increase the size of the military and even ask Americans to pay more through taxes. "How badly do we want to win this war to ensure that nobody can use this territory to kill three thousand Americans again?" he asks. "I'm willing to pay an extra dollar a gallon of gas for that to happen—who's with me?"

We'll soon find out. Nagl's instincts may be right. The case for rescuing Afghanistan with great military force and at vast expense may carry the day. No one can dispute that the world would be a better place if Afghanistan is peaceful, stable, and at least semi-democratic. But, as one painful war winds down and a deep recession strikes, it's unclear whether Americans are prepared to make the necessary sacrifices. Ultimately Obama, and the United States, may find that the goodness of this war isn't good—or simple—enough. ◆

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Man-Made Disaster

Five years on, the Department of Homeland Security is still a catastrophe.

JEFFREY ROSEN

Michael Chertoff needs an office. When I interviewed the secretary of Homeland Security this summer, we met in a pair of temporary locations between which he shuttles—first in the decaying Nebraska Avenue Complex of the naval station at Ward Circle (a center for signal analysis during World War II) and later in an unmarked and unfurnished office in the nondescript headquarters of U.S. Customs and Border Protection in the Ronald Reagan building, near the White House. Chertoff hasn't settled into an office partly because the six-year-old Department of Homeland Security (DHS) still has no permanent, consolidated headquarters. Instead, the unwieldy amalgam of 22 separate federal agencies operates out of 70 buildings at 40 different locations in the Washington area. And the lack of a real home is just the beginning of the department's bureaucratic problems. The most recent survey by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management on the job satisfaction of federal employees in 36 agencies ranked Homeland Security last or near last in every category. Meanwhile, officials from the Pentagon who have tried to do business with DHS complained to me of organizational chaos at the department. Homeland Security employees, they said, are often unaware of overlapping initiatives championed by their colleagues, and even by Chertoff himself.

This can't have been what Democrats and Republicans had in mind when they celebrated the creation of the department in November 2002—arguably the last moment of bipartisan cooperation that Washington would see for six years. Although hastily thrown together, DHS was hailed by most of official Washington as a necessary response to the extreme vulnerabilities exposed by the September 11 attacks. Today, that bipartisan consensus remains largely intact. In fact, as Barack Obama prepares to take office, some Democrats want to increase the department's budget, which is now over $40 billion per year. "I do think more money has to be spent, order of magnitude twenty to twenty-five percent more," I was told in July by James Steinberg, who emphasized that he was not speaking for the Obama campaign. (He is now expected to become deputy secretary of state.) "I don't think Secretary Chertoff has fought hard enough within the administration for his share of resources," P.J. Crowley, a homeland security expert at the Center for American Progress, told me in June. "If we continue to suggest we are at war, I wonder if DHS really is on a war-time footing." More recently, the nomination of the charismatic Janet Napolitano to head the department suggests that Obama himself is committed to a strong DHS. In announcing her nomination, Obama said, "She understands the need for a Department of Homeland Security that has the capacity to help prevent terrorist attacks and respond to catastrophe be it man-made or natural." It may still be years away from having a permanent headquarters, but the Department of Homeland Security, apparently, is here to stay.

Should that be cause for celebration or concern? This summer, I talked to security experts on both sides of the political spectrum, and had several conversations with Chertoff, in an effort to answer the following question: Is DHS achieving its mission of making us safer? My reluctant conclusion is that, although Chertoff has performed impressively in an impossible job, the department is hard to justify with any rational analysis of costs and benefits. On the contrary, it's arguably one of the most expensive marketing ventures in political history—an enterprise that seeks to make us *feel* safer instead of actually making us safer. The best argument for DHS is that the illusion of safety may itself provide tangible psychological and economic benefits: If people feel less afraid, they may be more likely to fly on planes. But even if conceived on these terms—as a more-than-$40-billion-dollar-a-year pacifier—the department is hard to defend, since there's no good evidence that it has, in fact, calmed Americans down rather than making us more nervous.

The only way of calming people down is political leadership that puts the terrorist threat in perspective. But, despite efforts by Chertoff to avoid the color-coded hysteria that defined the department in its early days, DHS officials inevitably feel pressure to exaggerate the terrorist threat—scaremongering that creates further public demand for promises of security that can't be fulfilled. And so the very existence of DHS creates a chain reaction of self-justifying insecurity. For this reason, Republicans (who used to be the stiff-upper-lip party of limited government) and Democrats (who don't trust the government to run the war in Iraq and are generally cautious about spending too much on defense) are willing to sink billions into an institutional money pit that has more to do with symbols than substance. Both parties seem incapable of acknowledging an uncomfortable but increasingly obvious truth: that the Department of Homeland Security was a bureaucratic and philosophical mistake.

To understand how DHS was hobbled from the beginning, it may be helpful to recall the partisan gymnastics surrounding its creation. After September 11, President Bush appointed Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge to head a new Office of Homeland Security in the White House. When Joe Lieberman first proposed setting up a cabinet-level homeland security department in October 2001, White House conservatives balked at the prospect of a vast new federal bureaucracy. But, as Lieberman's bill began to gain momentum, the White House decided it couldn't let the GOP be outflanked by Democrats in appearing tough on terror. In April 2002, after months of Republican senators fighting against Lieberman's bill, White House Chief of Staff Andy Card convened a secret working group to decide which federal agencies to merge into a homeland security department that would be created on Bush's terms. The mid-level White House staffers who were responsible for designing the new department met regularly with Card, Condoleezza Rice, and Cheney's chief of staff, Scooter Libby. Those staffers later told

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The Washington Post about the rushed and almost random character of much of their deliberation: The Immigration and Naturalization Service and Federal Emergency Management Agency were in, but, because of internal politics, the FBI was out. The Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was in because a White House security expert, Richard Falkenrath, called a friend and asked which of the Department of Energy's three research labs to include.

The White House announced the plan on June 6, 2002, the same day Coleen Rowley—a whistle-blower who had accused FBI leadership of ignoring warnings before September 11 about potential terrorists taking flying lessons—testified on the Hill. The Rowley story suggested the Bush administration had all the information it needed to prevent the attacks but had failed to connect the dots. According to Representative Jane Harman, the former ranking member on the House intelligence committee, the announcement may have been timed to move the Rowley story "below the fold" and out of the headlines. "I think they rushed this," Harman told me. "I don't ever think Bush was excited about this department" but he decided it was "politically expedient."

In addition to facing the bureaucratic challenge of merging 22 federal agencies into a single organization, the department was hampered by Congress's refusal to reorganize its oversight process: As a result, DHS at one point had to report to no fewer than 88 congressional oversight committees, a byzantine challenge that wasted the time of the department's leadership.

Tom Ridge, the first secretary of Homeland Security, took over on January 24, 2003. From the beginning, he was criticized for ineffectiveness, and, on his retirement, a terrorism expert told *The New York Times* that Ridge "seemed more interested in grabbing headlines" than executing an effective terrorism-prevention strategy. (Ridge did not respond to an interview request.) He administered the widely ridiculed color-coded alerts, which were raised to "orange" six times on his watch, and he was assailed by the DHS inspector general, Clark Ervin, for showy but ineffective transportation security measures. "I was issuing one critical report after another until I lost White House support," Ervin, now director of the homeland security program at the Aspen Institute, told me. Ridge resigned after Bush's reelection. In January 2005, Bush nominated Michael Chertoff to replace him.

From the start, Chertoff—a balding man with the razor-thin build of a dedicated runner (he has been quoted in *Runner's World*)—seemed to understand that his department's ambitious mission had to be defined more precisely. DHS's official charge is to "prevent and deter terrorist attacks and protect against and respond to threats and hazards to the Nation." But trying to prevent the next attack by guessing where it might occur is usually an exercise in futility. If one target is protected, an agile terrorist can always switch to another one; and there are, at least in theory, an infinite number of targets to protect. Moreover, even if this game of haphazard prevention sometimes succeeds, there is bound to be a lot of guesswork involved and therefore a lot of wasted effort. This makes preventing terrorist attacks an extremely expensive proposition—and one that can be difficult to justify on a cost-benefit basis.

Chertoff grasps all of this. (That is one of the reasons he has won bipartisan respect. "He has a quiet intelligence, a very calm demeanor, he's nonpartisan and non-polarizing . . . and his instinct is to solve problems, not to score points," says Harman, whose relationship with Chertoff is so amicable that they've gone jogging together.) As Chertoff told me, "You can't eliminate the risk, so you manage the risk." And so he tried to handle public expectations about security with a thoughtfully moderate approach that he called "somewhere between complacency and hysteria." He sought to focus federal efforts on preventing attacks (such as nuclear terrorism) that would strike a significant blow against our economic system, while insisting that smaller events (such as lone bombers on buses) couldn't be prevented and weren't primarily a federal concern.

And yet, even as Chertoff conceded that there was only so much government could do in the realm of prevention, the department continued to spend lavishly on questionable prevention measures. More than one-third of homeland security spending in 2006 was devoted to protecting what DHS calls "critical infrastructure and key assets." That year, DHS asked Congress for more than $2 billion to finance state and local homeland security grants, some of which were devoted to installing surveillance cameras. The cameras were sold to the public as a way of preventing crime. But a comprehensive survey of studies published by the Home Office in Britain—which has more security cameras than any other European nation—found that cameras have "no effect" on violent crime in the United States or the United Kingdom. When I asked Chertoff about the cameras, he conceded something few other officials have been willing to admit: that they don't deter terrorist attacks. "The cameras don't prevent," he told me. "But they allow you to respond and capture. And that's maybe not the best thing, but it's maybe the second-best thing." Even as a tool of investigation, however, it's not clear cameras are worth the cost. The London subway bombers, for example, were caught after they showed up on camera, but they probably would have been caught even if they hadn't been videoed: Intelligence work, rather than the cameras, led to their capture. "The question isn't whether the cameras are useful; the question is whether they're essential—or would it be better to spend that money on the policeman on the beat?" says security expert Bruce Schneier.

Schneier argues that few of the high-profile items DHS has funded can survive a cost-benefit analysis. Sky marshals cost hundreds of millions of dollars per year but have added little to the sensible security measure of reinforcing cockpit doors; instead, sky marshals killed a mentally ill, unarmed passenger at a Florida airport in 2005. The Real ID Act—which Chertoff championed and which requires state driver's licenses and ID cards to conform to a common standard defined by DHS—might allow terrorists without a criminal background to obtain a trusted credential while encouraging security officers to let down their guard. And screening cargo at ports for radioactivity hasn't detected a single nuclear bomb, but it has generated 500 false alarms per day at the Long Beach and Los Angeles ports. John Mueller—a political scientist and author of *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them*—has compared federal homeland security expenditures since September 11 with the expected lives saved as a result of the increased spending and concluded that the annual cost ranged from $64 million to $600 million per life saved. By contrast, the federal government's standard regulatory goal for cost-effective prevention measures is $1 to $10 million per life saved.

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Chertoff insists that at least some of the department's focus on prevention of high-impact terrorism has paid off. When I asked him whether DHS deserved credit for the fact that we haven't been attacked since September 11, he reeled off a list of half a dozen or so plots that have been blocked during that time, most notably the plot in August 2006 to use liquid explosives to blow up planes flying from London to the United States.

The 2006 airline-bombing plot, however, doesn't seem like a convincing testament to the success of the department. Last September, after a five-month trial, a British jury refused to find any of the eight bombing suspects guilty of conspiring to target transatlantic planes. (Three defendants were found guilty on conspiracy to murder charges.) One reason the charges failed to persuade a jury, according to press reports, is that British and American officials disagreed about when to arrest the suspects, with the British arguing unsuccessfully that an attack wasn't imminent. Moreover, even if the episode is considered a success for the U.S. government, it's not clear that the Department of Homeland Security deserves most of the credit: It was surveillance by British and American intelligence and law enforcement officials—not the increased security at airports overseen by DHS—that led to the arrests and halted the plot.

The department is hardly the only arm of the federal government to succumb to a prevention-at-all-costs mentality. In fact, Chertoff and DHS deserve credit for trying at times to resist that mindset. In 2007, for example, Congress mandated that, by 2012, all containers bound for the United States must first be scanned for radiation in foreign ports. Chertoff convincingly criticized this requirement as an example of the tendency to "govern by anecdote"—to allow compelling narratives to drive decision-making, as opposed to choosing policies that achieve the greatest good for the greatest number. "My belief is that the genesis of this went back to the 2004 campaign for president, when someone must have told John Kerry that only four percent of containers were being inspected, and four percent sounds like a low number, so that became an easy target," Chertoff told me. We now scan 100 percent of the cargo coming into the country in U.S. ports, but Chertoff argues that it makes little sense to insist on radiation scanning in foreign ports like England, where terrorists are unlikely to build nuclear bombs to be shipped to the United States. This year, Chertoff implemented an initiative to expand overseas scanning on the trade routes with the highest security threats; but, despite his more targeted alternative, the cumbersome congressional mandate remains in place.

If prevention measures like cameras and 100 percent port screening are largely a waste, why is there so much pressure to sink money into them? The answer, as Chertoff understands, is human psychology. When I asked him whether any books or scholars had influenced his thinking about how to measure success in the war on terrorism, he cited *Failing to Win: Perceptions of Victory and Defeat in International Politics*, by the political scientists Dominic D.P. Johnson and Dominic Tierney, published in 2006. Johnson and Tierney note that the Tet offensive, considered by historians an objective victory for U.S. troops, is widely perceived to be a loss because expectations for the United States were so much greater than for North Vietnam. For Chertoff, examples like this suggest that government officials should lower expectations about how much security the public can reasonably expect.

Nevertheless, I was surprised that Chertoff cited *Failing to Win*, since one implication of the book is that the Department of Homeland Security should never have been created. Johnson and Tierney argue that people wildly overestimate the risk of being threatened by terrorism. One reason British citizens perceived the evacuation of 340,000 troops at Dunkirk as a victory rather than what it was—a crushing defeat—was because of memorable images of a flotilla of plucky civilian volunteers sailing small vessels from England to rescue the troops. (In fact, many of them were evacuated on warships.) The same elements of psychology lead people to exaggerate the likelihood of terrorist attacks: Images of terrifying but highly unusual catastrophes on television—such as the World Trade Center collapsing—are far more memorable than images of more mundane and more prevalent threats, like dying in car crashes. Psychologists call this the "availability heuristic," in which people estimate the probability of something occurring based on how easy it is to bring examples of the event to mind.

As a result of this psychological bias, large numbers of Americans have overestimated the probability of future terrorist strikes: In a poll conducted a few weeks after September 11, respondents saw a 20 percent chance that they would be personally harmed in a terrorist attack within the next year and nearly a 50 percent chance that the average American would be harmed. Those alarmist predictions, thankfully, proved to be wrong; in fact, since September 11, international terrorism has killed only a few hundred people per year around the globe, as John Mueller points out in *Overblown*. At the current rates, Mueller argues, the lifetime probability of any resident of the globe being killed by terrorism is just one in 80,000.

This public anxiety is the central reason for both the creation of DHS and its subsequent emphasis on showy prevention measures, which Schneier calls a form of "security theater." But that raises a question: Even if DHS doesn't actually make us safer, could its existence still be justified if reducing the public's fears leads to tangible economic benefits? "If the public's response is based on irrational, emotional fears, it may be reasonable for the government to do things that make us feel better, even if those don't make us safer in a rational sense, because if they feel better, people will fly on planes and behave in a way that's good for the economy," Tierney told me. But the psychological impact of DHS still has to be subject to cost-benefit analysis: On balance, is the government actually calming people rather than making them more nervous? Tierney argues convincingly that the same public fears that encourage government officials to spend money on flashy preventive measures also encourage them to exaggerate the terrorist threat. "It's very difficult for a government official to come out and say anything like, 'Let's put this threat in perspective,'" he told me. "If they were to do so, and there isn't a terrorist attack, they get no credit; and, if there is, that's the end of their career." Of course, no government official feels this pressure more acutely than the head of homeland security. And so, even as DHS seeks to tamp down public fears with expensive and often wasteful preventive measures, it may also be encouraging those fears—which, in turn, creates ever more public demand for spending on prevention.

Michael Chertoff's public comments about terrorism embody this dilemma:

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Despite his laudable efforts to speak soberly and responsibly about terrorism—and to argue that there are many kinds of attacks we simply can't prevent—the incentives associated with his job have led him at times to increase, rather than diminish, public anxiety. Last March he declared that, "if we don't recognize the struggle we are in as a significant existential struggle, then it is going to be very hard to maintain the focus." If nuclear attacks aren't likely and smaller events aren't existential threats, I asked, why did he say the war on terrorism is a "significant existential struggle"? "To me, existential is a threat that shakes the core of a society's confidence and causes a significant and long-lasting line of damage to the country," he replied. But it would take a series of weekly Virginia Tech–style shootings or London-style subway bombings to shake the core of American confidence; and Al Qaeda hasn't come close to mustering that frequency of low-level attacks in any Western democracy since September 11. "Terrorism kills a certain number of people, and so do forest fires," Mueller told me. "If terrorism is merely killing certain numbers of people, then it's not an existential threat, and money is better spent on smoke alarms or forcing people to wear seat belts instead of chasing terrorists."

The threat of terrorism is deadly serious, of course, and the federal government has an important role to play in addressing it. But the focus on security theater at DHS may be distracting the federal government from the two categories of things it can do well: intelligence—that is, investigation of specific threats before strikes occur—and responding to disasters and attacks after they have happened. "The place where we can get the most leverage for our terrorism dollars is at the beginning, working with overseas police to roll up terrorist financing through effective intelligence, and at the end, with emergency response and disaster relief," says Schneier. "The stuff in the middle that requires us to guess the plot correctly really is a waste of money."

According to policing scholar Dennis Kenney of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, the prevention technologies DHS likes to fund have never been effective in revealing plots before they are hatched and tend to lead to information overload. Instead, Kenney says, "the best police department doesn't have the best technologies; it has good community relations with citizens who want to tell them what's going on." Kenney notes that the New York police uncovered a post–September 11 subway bombing plot because of a tip and arrested the suspects when they arrived at the station. During the Clinton administration, the Justice Department prevented abortion clinic bombings by winning the trust of pro-lifers, who then turned over their members at the radical fringe. And Kenney notes that the Colombian police, in one of the most striking terrorism successes of the past few years, have learned the same lesson: "Fifteen years ago, the military had no way of knowing where to strike; now they have information coming to the Colombian police from the community about where the FARC terrorists and narco-terrorists are, because the police have built community trust." In other words, it's rigorous police work—not unwieldy prevention measures designed to detect every possible attack—that probably represents our best hope for stopping terrorists before they strike.

In the other realm where the federal government can play a constructive role—reacting effectively after a disaster has taken place—DHS failed its biggest test so far. Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans six-and-a-half months after Chertoff took office, and the ineptitude of the department's response had a severe human cost. The little noticed bipartisan report on Katrina by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs found that "Chertoff himself should have been more engaged in preparations over the weekend before landfall" and "his performance in the nation's worst domestic disaster fell short of reasonable expectations." A day after landfall, "DHS officials were still struggling to determine the 'ground truth' about the extent of the flooding despite the many reports it had received about the catastrophe," while "DHS leaders did not become fully engaged in recovery efforts" until three days after the hurricane struck. The report details failure to heed repeated warnings, poor advance planning, broken lines of communication between DHS and the military as well as between state and federal officials, pointless turf wars between DHS and the Justice Department, and incompetence at every level. But the overwhelming conclusion of the document is that the response represented a failure of political leadership. When I asked Chertoff about this, he conceded that, before Katrina, he underestimated the public leadership aspects of his job.

The failures surrounding Katrina suggest that reacting effectively to disaster involves more than coordinating emergency response; it means preparing society to cope, practically and psychologically, with the disasters that are an inevitable part of life. On the practical side, Stephen Flynn of the Council on Foreign Relations believes we need to do a better job of supporting first-responders. Republicans, he argues, have allowed a rigid states' rights ideology to create an artificial distinction between federal and state responses to natural disasters and small-scale acts of terrorism—denying local cops and firefighters the resources and support they need. As for the psychological side: Instead of a security mindset, which assumes we're either safe or not, Flynn's buzzword is resilience—the idea that you can't prevent all hazards but can organize communities to recover quickly once inevitable hazards occur. "The more resilient we become as a society, the less consequential acts of terrorism become, and that requires acting in ways DHS hasn't been acting," Flynn told me. "One is being far more open with the American people about vulnerabilities, and another is empowering us about how we address the vulnerabilities so we don't have an unbounded sense of fear."

In that sense, perhaps Janet Napolitano's best qualification for the problematic job she will soon inherit is her background as an effective and popular governor. After all, the only way to make the public more resilient is through political leadership. Before World War II, people understood that life was fraught with risk, and presidents like Lincoln and Roosevelt could challenge the public to be brave in the face of uncertainty and danger. Today, by contrast, we have come to believe that life is risk-free and that, if something bad happens, there must be a government official to blame. The Department of Homeland Security—with its doomed quest to give Americans the illusion of total security—is the ultimate monument to our anxious age. The biggest contribution Barack Obama could make in the realm of homeland security has nothing to do with port screening or security cameras or federal budgets. Perhaps our new president instead can lead us to rediscover the sense of self-reliance that we long ago forgot how to find within ourselves. ◆

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Stanley Kauffmann on Films

TAKING RISKS

Every director needs at least some courage, but Arnaud Desplechin has quite a lot. With his new film, *A Christmas Tale*, he bravely took on a trite form, hoping that he could vitalize it. He succeeds. He also gave the picture a title that risks the corny, apparently sure that it would come to seem ironic. Eventually it even transcends irony.

Born in Roubaix, an industrial city in northern France, Desplechin, with co-author Emmanuel Bourdieu, sets his story there. The pattern is familiar: a large family gathers—in this case for the holiday, but in other films it has been for a birthday or an anniversary—and, in the course of time and drink, the seemingly merry group splits into hates and spites and jealousies. Desplechin varies the pattern from the start: he tells us very early that this group has troubles. The daughter of the family, a playwright named Elizabeth, hates one of her brothers, Henri, a drifter, because of a quarrel five years ago. She has not spoken to him in those five years. Further, we learn early that Elizabeth's sixteen-year-old son, Paul, quiet, dreamy, is schizophrenic. To cap these unfestive preliminaries there is some news about the matriarch, Junon. She has just been diagnosed with leukemia, the illness that killed her infant son many years ago, and she needs a transfusion of bone marrow. Shaded by all these opening matters, the title soon looks a bit guileful.

Yet the film encloses these anti-mistletoe facts in its holiday shape. The family gathering includes mother, father, two sons and a daughter, a nephew, and others. This Christmas is never jolly, but the aura of celebration affects behavior. For instance, Simon, Junon's nephew, has long been silently in love with Sylvia, his cousin's wife, and during the holiday—in a way because of it—we see that silence breached. Then the doctors discover that two of the family have the right type of bone marrow for Junon, troublesome Henri and reticent Paul. Along with the ordinary gift-giving, we see the decision made about the donor of this rather extraordinary present.

A CHRISTMAS TALE
IFC Films

WENDY AND LUCY
Oscilloscope Pictures

Desplechin holds his film in a context formed of two factors. First, this family, woes and all, very soon takes us in. We do not observe—we enter. Their troubles affect us as if we were participants: these people are so authentic that it would almost be rude to resist. The second factor derives from their immediacy: the family's general view of life—a basically tacit philosophy. It is manifested first by Junon, when she learns of her condition. Here is a woman who is told that she is close to death, but she is neither distraught nor panicky nor desperate. She accepts the news not because she relies on a donor in her family—she doesn't yet know of one. She simply accepts it. Though she never articulates her view, it clearly suffuses her—a sense that life consists of whatever happens to you, nothing more, nothing less. (A Danish prince said, "The readiness is all.") Her behavior sets the tone for a film that wraps troubled people in a sort of composure.

Junon is played by Catherine Deneuve, who is just about old enough to convince as a matriarch but is exactly right for the calm fatalism of the role. The death of her first child decades ago from the disease that now threatens her has apparently tempered her mind and spirit to acceptance, almost as if a pattern were being fulfilled. Most of the others breathe the same air of acceptance about themselves. Her husband, Abel, played by the endearingly homely Jean-Paul Roussillon, is of course concerned about Junon but shares her dignity in the face of the imponderable. Mathieu Amalric's unruly but appealing Henri bases his pococurantism on a shrug in the face of existence. There is one exception to the general mood. Sylvia—played affectingly by Chiara Mastroianni, daughter of Catherine Deneuve and the late great Marcello—has her affair with her husband's cousin as a kind of protest against the idea of acceptance.

At one point in the film, Henri, somewhat bewildered but amused at his bewilderment, says, "We're all in the middle of a myth, and I don't know what the myth is." Here is Desplechin's atmospherics, a belief that the real exists within the perimeter of the abstract. The holiday party itself is part of the mythology, not through religion but through the shaping of pattern, almost peripheral pattern. This is more than irony. It is, in a large sense, enclosure—in myth that we are conscious of from time to time but that, as Henri says, we do not understand. (As if to confirm his percept, in the last moments of this veristic film comes an outright allusion to the mythic: a brief quotation from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and a snatch of Mendelssohn's music.)

Desplechin delves into these complexities simply by focusing on his people. (Literally, too: that focus includes occasional iris shots for emphasis. Not incidentally, Desplechin was once a cinematographer.) Patently he thinks that the

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subtlest way to penetrate states of mind is through fidelity to dailiness, to character. He has skill, patience, empathy, and insight; quickened by the holiday occasion, they make the title of his film ultimately, if unconventionally, right.

A new American film also challenges formula—more, it risks banality. *Wendy and Lucy* is about a young woman, Wendy, who is traveling with her dog, Lucy, the two of them facing a new life together. Not an immediately promising idea. Still, daring to begin with that risk of arrant tear-jerking, this concise eighty-minute picture goes on to become a treat.

The director, Kelly Reichardt, wrote the screenplay with Jonathan Raymond, who wrote the original story. They also collaborated on the screenplay of *Old Joy*, which in 2006 announced the arrival, in Reichardt, of a gifted director. That film was about a momentous weekend in the lives of two middle-aged men, hippies who up to that moment have ignored social proprieties. *Wendy and Lucy* has another antagonist of convention, but this time it is a young woman. Wendy has left her (apparently adequate) Midwest home and in a ramshackle car is heading, with her dog, toward Alaska and change. We meet them in an Oregon town, where the car collapses and Lucy gets lost.

Wendy ties Lucy to a post outside a supermarket and goes into the store to shoplift. (Her money is tight.) She is caught, arrested, kept overnight in jail, fined, and released. She has been worrying most about Lucy. By the time she gets back to the supermarket plaza, the dog is gone. Most of the film is about Wendy's efforts to find her. Except for one scary night when she sleeps in a park, the level of drama in the piece is low. This is exactly right for the film: Reichardt is not out for blasts. Evidently she believes that drama isn't only a matter of great agons: lesser jolts can open chasms. Wendy is very quickly frightened by the surprising gap in her life that the loss of her dog opens up. It is precisely because of the large effect of the relatively small loss—small (even pet owners might agree) as against the wilderness of the world at large—that we want to comfort Wendy. Yet it is her experience of the few days without Lucy that brings her to her final generosity.

Wendy talks with only a few people in that Oregon town, but in each instance the encounter defines a person. Walter Dalton, as a friendly security guard at a parking lot, is warmly freighted with that old man's past. Will Patton, as the head mechanic of the garage where Wendy wants her car repaired, seems to have interrupted a real-life garage job to appear in this film. If these two men were gruff toward the young stranger in town, it would be believable but pat. The guard's decency and the mechanic's patience make Wendy herself seem even more forlorn.

Michelle Williams, who was Heath Ledger's wife in *Brokeback Mountain*, is Wendy, completely. She apparently did not prepare her role by making what actors call choices, but by imaginative union with the woman she was playing. Then she let the choices come as they would and will. There is no bravura in Williams, only a pledge to be less visible than Wendy, to be less the heroine of a film than a person in this town on whom the camera happens to light.

Reichardt, who edited her own picture, directs with a transformative eye. She selects and combines and glides along, savoring as she goes. Her pensive quality lends implication to what she looks at. (Shots of a railroad freight yard carry hints—even threats—of the hobo life. On the other hand, shots of rows of neat houses suggest security bought with rote.) Her film is made with loving precision, confidently bypassing the sentimental, and at the last it is quietly genuine. In happy sum, Reichardt is one more of the current American directors, most of them still young, who are endowing our film world with pleasure and hope. ◆

Jed Perl on Art

PRIVATE LIVES

I.

What will be the impact of the financial crisis on artists, galleries, and auction houses? I sense that many important players in the art market have seen a slowdown coming since the beginning of the year, and it is reasonable to assume that in New York City, where the art scene in the West Twenties has grown dramatically in the past decade, some galleries will close. At the high-end auctions this fall, many works did not find buyers, and the anxiety in the voices of a number of art dealers in the last few weeks has been unmistakable, unlike anything I can recall. There are different theories about how this will sort itself out. Some see a return to sobriety, an end to the most egregious excesses of art-world glamour-mongering, and a strengthening of interest in artists with steadier, less glitzy reputations and longer, more gradual careers. Others argue that with the financial markets in disarray, the people with the most disposable income are going to conclude that the Jeff Koons they put near the swimming pool a few years ago is the best investment they ever made. Now, as before, everybody sees what they want to see.

GIORGIO MORANDI, 1890–1964
Metropolitan Museum of Art

JOAN MIRÓ: PAINTING AND ANTI-PAINTING 1927–1937
Museum of Modern Art

MARY HEILMANN: TO BE SOMEONE
New Museum

LIVE FOREVER: ELIZABETH PEYTON
New Museum

DOUGLAS BLAU
Institute of Contemporary Art

I have to confess that I have only a limited interest in these questions. Experience has taught me that every decade or so the art market gets weak in the knees, and when it roars back a few years later the picture palaces specializing in Warhol and other assorted idiocies do better than ever before. It is my unshakeable conviction that artists who are truly engaged in their craft will pursue it no matter what. I have never known the quality of an artist's work to be affected, one way or another, by economic circumstances. Among the contemporary artists I admire, there are those who make a living by selling their work and those who make their living differently, and artistically it does not really matter one way or the other.

As for the public's responses to work in the galleries and the museums, the fact that fewer people are inclined to open their checkbooks does not mean that visitors do not still have eyes to see with and hearts to feel with. Indeed, the argument may be made that in times of economic or social or political upheaval, the arts become more important, precisely because they stand apart from the mael-

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strom. The ups and downs of Wall Street or the Beltway do not affect the way we approach the Morandi retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, or the Miró exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, or Mary Heilmann's paintings at the New Museum, or Sheila Hicks's eloquent weavings at Davis and Langdale, or the swill in Richard Prince's new show at the Gagosian Gallery. In good times and in bad times, there will be good things to see and bad things to see. Some people will deduce from this that the arts have failed to connect with the rest of life. I arrive at the reverse conclusion—that the arts, because they are in a deep way autonomous, have an essential and inextinguishable place in our lives.

Art, so it seems to me, represents the triumph of private feeling over public pressures, or at least the ability of private feeling to assert itself in the face of public pressures and public values. I would argue that true art is always characterized by its unto-itself-ness, its freestandingness, its independence. This is not to say that the arts are untouched by the rest of life, only that they are affected by it in their own fashion. I cannot insist too much on this point. It is certainly a marginal view at present, when most discussions about contemporary art tend to focus on the artist's social and economic success. Artists such as Damien Hirst and Jeff Koons are famous for being famous, and what generally interests people about their work is not what they do but why the particular sort of thing that they do has found favor in the marketplace. Such questions, which keep journalists working overtime, are by no means regarded as merely journalistic. Contextualism has a great deal of intellectual cachet: in the past generation, the work of artists from Rembrandt to Picasso has been interpreted by some of the most widely respected art historians as fueled not by imaginative necessity but by market forces, and the argument goes far beyond the perfectly reasonable supposition that some artists have been savvy salesmen.

It is true that there is no artist who has ever stood entirely apart from his or her time. But whatever the complexities of the artist's shifting social and economic situation, the artistic act is also an individualistic impulse rooted in the sense of self that is at the heart of the human condition. Meyer Schapiro believed this to be the case not only among the artists of Romantic Europe but even among the sculptors and painters of Romanesque Europe, and although his views remain controversial, I am convinced that they are incontrovertible. If you believe that art is, in all times and places, a reflection of the possibilities of individuality, then you must embrace this as an a priori conviction, a matter of philosophy.

If I insist on this point, it is because when I go to the galleries and the museums I am looking for something with the power to push away the particulars of the moment, to demonstrate the power of the individual as an arbiter of his or her own imagination. We do not need artists to tell us that these are perilous economic times. And we do not need art to tell us that Barack Obama's victory signals a magnificent new direction in American political life. Art is not a mirror of society but an essential part of the fabric of society, with a unique role to play, and more than anything else its role has to do with affirming the stubborn particularity of a person's experience.

II.

The question of artistic individualism—of the extent to which an artist's style is a reflection of personal choice rather than public opinion—is much in play right now at the New Museum, which is host to shows of paintings and other works by Elizabeth Peyton and Mary Heilmann. Both these painters have gained a strong following in recent years precisely because they are not mass-production artists in the vein of Hirst or Koons. Peyton's small portraits of friends and notables are frankly, vehemently painterly, with flashy, high-keyed color; you are left with the impression that she tossed these little pictures off in an hour, as if they were mash notes. And Heilmann's abstract paintings, also sometimes exuberantly candy-colored, reprise old-modern formal concerns about shape and structure with a what-the-hell insouciance. "Mary Heilmann: To Be Someone," which was organized at the Orange County Museum of Art in Newport Beach, California, and "Live Forever: Elizabeth Peyton," which the New Museum has put together, make an interesting pair. These artists—born a generation apart, Heilmann in 1940, Peyton in 1965—suggest that individualism may be not only a subject, but also a snare or an illusion, a pose or a defense. It is no wonder that formal questions often turn out to be questions of character.

Heilmann begins with a most appealing assumption, namely that the language of abstract art, which was already well established by the time she was a young artist, is something that she can now employ in the most intimate manner, as if non-objectivity were not an ideology to be shouted from the rooftops but a predilection to be whispered and gossiped about. The thin washes of paint and casually irregular edges—the general offhandedness—that Heilmann brings to her work gives her admirers the feeling that she is sidling up to Mondrian and Hofmann and Newman and Noland, joshing with them, kidding around. Heilmann's winking approach to formal matters succeeds in two paintings in the New Museum show, *Neo Noir* (1998) and *The Third Man* (1999), both darkly twinkling canvases. Heilmann has arrayed rectilinear patches of brilliant color, the hot pinks and oranges and racy yellows and blues she favors, and then she has layered a scumble of deep midnight blue over the surface, leaving little rectangular openings through which the brilliant bits shine forth. There is a nighttime romanticism about these paintings, and the provisional quality of the paint handling, the washy darks and the lopsided bright edges, suggests sneakily rapturous emotions. In these two works, Heilmann's playfulness and off-kilter lyricism are lodged deep in the canvas. But more often, her variegated gambits—the gaggles of differently colored spots, the meandering lines, the psychedelic stripes—fail to give informality a legible, formal value.

Nobody would claim that Mary Heilmann is not an individualist. The problem that I have with her individualism is that it is not clearly enough stamped on her work. The dare-to-be-a-slob unfinished style of so many of her paintings does not register as a realization of a personality but as a souvenir of one. The painting becomes a Dadaist gesture. The critic Dave Hickey begins his essay in the Heilmann catalogue by explaining that the artist, whom he regards with great warmth, has always struck him as being like the schoolgirl in pigtails in a famous painting by Norman Rockwell, "sitting on a bench outside the principal's office with an enormous black eye and a smile of sly triumph on her lips. In my lexicon, that's Mary.... The atmosphere of that sly smile brightens the offhand insouciance of her paintings; it enhances their tomboy dishabille and inflects their self-possession with an impish kind of glee."

I would love a painting that did all that. The problem with Hickey's salute is that he is not admiring Heilmann's paintings. He is admiring the artist herself, much as Duchamp's buddies used to look at one of his utterly static and uninteresting Readymades and imbue it with all the charm and sly wit of their friend Marcel. Wit, paradox, and ambiguity can be sunk

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deep into an abstract painting. Thornton Willis, an artist of pretty much the same generation as Heilmann, has done something like this in his recent canvases, where the ebullient harlequin patterning suggests an utterly unexpected and slyly disquieting encounter between the spirit of Abstract Expressionism and the spirit of the commedia dell'arte. As for Heilmann and her supporters, I do not think they can see where an interesting person ends and an interesting painting begins.

The strange thing about Heilmann—and I would say the same about Peyton—is that she is not individualistic enough. In order for individual values to become formal values, they must be transformed through an artistic process that is at once furiously personal and—if it succeeds—strangely impersonal. Such a process involves a kind of inwardness and steadiness that I do not see in Heilmann or Peyton. Peyton has clever, amusing instincts. While her portrait subjects vary—she has done drawings of King Ludwig of Bavaria, and news reports in the days after the election highlighted her painting of Michelle Obama—Peyton's essential subject is a youngish art and music crowd, with impressions of celebrities such as Kurt Cobain mingling with portraits of her own friends.

Nearly everybody who thinks about the bohemian playground that is Peyton's world rightly sees allusions to the art of Florine Stettheimer, Alex Katz, David Hockney, Wolfgang Tillmans, and Nan Goldin. I, too, enjoy looking at pictures of attractive, offbeat people whiling away the hours. Elizabeth Peyton is by no means a disinterested spectator in this laid-back comedy of manners. She is one of those women who have a taste for slender, delicately handsome young men, the kind of sly gypsy boys who sometimes landed the knockout girlfriends in college and whose very passivity had something to do with their heterosexual power. The world that Peyton chronicles is perfectly credible; it is her paintings that are not believable. The sociology may be interesting, but what she has done with it amounts to little more than setting up a series of visual place-markers. In Peyton's pictures the flesh tones are hesitant, the lips and eyebrows look pasted on, and the contrast of dark hair and pale skin is repeated in a formulaic way.

Both Heilmann and Peyton have made their reputations in a post-ideological art world where painters believe they are free to do their own thing, working figuratively or abstractly or in any combination of the two, without recourse to any particular view of historical development. While the promise of a post-ideological era in the arts is that each work will be judged on its own merits, in practice the ensuing pluralistic confusion has left many artists more convinced than ever that they must develop a personal brand. Art history has not been replaced by personal history so much as by niche marketing, with artists known less for what they do than for where they show and who collects and discusses their work.

Given Peyton's rock-star reputation and her retro-chic allure, it may seem to some like apostasy to point out that her work might usefully be compared to that of some less widely discussed representational artists, such as Stuart Shils, whose landscapes are currently at the Tibor de Nagy Gallery, an establishment associated with traditional values, which for many people places Shils in an entirely different universe from Peyton. I would argue that both these artists fall short for some of the same reasons. They both make a fetish of the little picture. They both have a sweet tooth for poetic generalization. The smeared or dragged areas of saturated or paled color that Shils uses to evoke immediate impressions are lyrical only in the most frustratingly telegraphic way, and in that sense not unlike Peyton's rapid-fire evocations of a friend's blankly dreamy gaze.

Peyton and Shils—and even Heilmann, in her slightly histrionic way—ask to be admired for their marginality. Each of these artists has rejected the idea of the major statement, of the work that has a polemical power. I sympathize with their distaste for grandstanding. Still, as anybody knows who has studied the wonderful images in the margins of medieval manuscripts, what really matters is what you do once you have established yourself at the margins. The weaver Sheila Hicks, who was born in 1934 and whose intimately scaled work was at Davis and Langdale in October, has a feeling for the romantic possibilities of geometry that some people see in Heilmann's work, with the difference that Hicks gives her images a metaphoric intricacy. Hicks, who has done her roughly nine-by-six-inch weavings on the same handloom since the 1960s, works with a wide varieties of fibers and a rainbow's worth of colors, so that the essentially rectilinear nature of the weaver's warp and woof becomes the staging ground for tumbled allusions and associations.

At Davis and Langdale, each weaving was accompanied by a bit of descriptive

This book constitutes a surgical dissection of the Republican Party, exposing it as the Party of Big Business, the POBB. Furthermore it is the Party of White Males, lacking even a single black member in Congress. (The Democrats have 44). The POBB's Congressional ranks contain few women, only 27, while the Democrats have 64.

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writing, a sort of prose poem that urged a gallerygoer to set off into the labyrinth of Hicks's mind. About *Weaving From Memory*, a warm, tawny composition with forms interlocking to suggest the geological or archeological past, Hicks had this to say: "Prisoner of recall. Locked thoughts couched in the landscape of an endless saga. Contained blocks of confident Autumn harmony. Not far from Versailles." These open-ended notes urge us to view the composition, which is made of cotton, linen, silk, and wool, as a fragment of some obscure yet richly articulated visual language. In Hicks's work, geological, vegetal, and urbanist metaphors jostle against one another, sometimes pressing on us simultaneously. Hicks is immersed in the history of weaving. At times she seems to be channeling the attitudes of weavers past, suggesting the matter-of-fact decorative power of American Indian blankets, or the medievalist nostalgia of the Arts and Crafts movement, or the modernist optimism of the Bauhaus. Art history becomes personal history, which is the only art history that ever really matters.

The colossal oddity of Hicks's little weavings (she calls them *Minimes*) is the key to their success. Her secret is the secret of any fiercely individualistic view of tradition, namely that the artist must not operate outside of tradition, but must instead wrap herself very tightly in a particular view of tradition. This takes a good deal of guts, and maybe even a degree of megalomania. Douglas Blau, whose collages assembled of film stills and postcards and halftone reproductions are the subject of an exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia this fall, dares to create his own mythopoetic history of Europe. He loves to set archetypal figures—the young man, the scientist, the woman in love, the old hermit, the dying hero—against the Continent's ever-changing moral climate. Blau's work has a hipster-nerd appeal. But the sleek postmodern style is only a come-on, and behind that façade he has somehow preserved the soul of a humanist. Blau sees human nature as fundamentally consistent, as a single story that transcends the differing emotional and psychological and intellectual force fields of northern Europe and southern Europe, of Gothic Europe and Baroque Europe and modern Europe. His collages suggest Joseph Cornell's fascination with times past, except that Cornell was content to crystallize in some of his greatest boxes a certain image of French bohemian experience, a fin-de-siècle eternalized through memory and nostalgia, whereas Blau's project has some of the lunatic appeal of Aby Warburg's endlessly expanding map of visual archetypes.

At the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia—where Blau's work is being generously displayed for the first time in more than a decade—he trumps every other artist today who works with appropriated images. Blau's materials are wide-ranging, eclectic. He loves stills from period films, where actors in the 1940s or the 1980s play nineteenth-century characters, but it is not the kitsch of these images that interests him so much as the efforts of directors and actors and set designers to reach beyond our sense of the past to some truth about the past. When he offers, in one collage, several different versions of a classic painting—perhaps a black-and-white postcard, a color postcard, and a reproduction cut from an auction catalogue—he is not rejecting the aura of the original so much as describing the onslaught of images that simultaneously aggrandizes and muffles an artist's vision. Blau likes to overlap different reproductions of the same work of art until these replicas suggest a house of mirrors. Somehow the effect is not to diminish the sense of artistic originality, but to underscore it. The proliferation of copies, which Blau shuffles with the aplomb of a dealer at a table in a casino, becomes a testament to the power of the original.

In Philadelphia, Blau's love affair with the nineteenth century struck me as richer and more complex than Cornell's, though lacking some of Cornell's plangency and shivering sweetness. If Cornell was content to suggest an evening in a little Left Bank hotel, Blau takes as his subject the entire European panorama, the parks and libraries and boudoirs of the nineteenth century, where material culture became a barometer of internal moods. The titles of some of the collages in Philadelphia give a sense of their wild ambitions: *The Course of Empire: Twilight (The Ambassadors)*; *The Academy by Gaslight (Sculpture Hall Scene)*; *Public Gardens (The General's Daughter)*. Blau, who began his career as a curator, is a gatherer and sifter of images. He stands Cubist collage on its head: the Cubists used collage to shatter reality, but for Blau collage is a way of joining together the pieces of the past, of resurrecting the past. His work is cool and dispassionate, but also crazy with feeling.

Blau's collages, which can at first feel finicky, are in fact full of bold strokes and grand gestures. I am excited by any artist who insists that a private vision is also a large vision, suggesting that marginality can have its own kind of monumentality. This is surely also the case with the paintings of Mari Lyons, who, in a series of exhibitions at the First Street Gallery over the past few years, has staked her claim as the complete painter, the master of every genre: still life, interior, portrait, figure, landscape, and cityscape. In September, she exhibited views of upstate New York. I think Lyons wanted us to come to these new paintings with memories of her intricately comedic studies of the parade of people and cars and buses on New York's Upper West Side and of her strikingly eccentric studio interiors, where a carousel horse and a spinning wheel and an African bird and a vase of flowers overlap like rival voices in a late-night conversation. With these new landscapes, Lyons urges us to embrace another side of her personality: a certain quietism, a desire to sit still and contemplate the solidity of a solitary tree or the pinkish light on a hill dense with foliage. Painting the landscape, Lyons holds fast to the urgency that registers in the intensity of her brushwork, in the ripe, confident attack, the unabashed color. Some small landscapes, with areas of color laid in with thick strokes, have a buttery seduction. This show was, more than anything else, about color becoming light.

The idea of the complete painter, the painter who is master of all genres, is an old one, and in modern times it registers as a particular assertion of personal possibility. A few weeks after Lyons's show closed, I saw the overview of works by Louisa Matthiasdottir at Tibor de Nagy. Matthiasdottir, who died in 2000, was born in Iceland and lived most of her life in New York, where she brought a classical modern feeling for the solidity of abstract form to her ringingly succinct evocations of naturalistic space. Like Lyons, Matthiasdottir had no interest in specializing in one type of subject. She moved from still life to the figure to the landscape and back, developing as she went a sense of personal amplitude. It is risky for an artist to attempt to recapitulate so many of the traditional Western pictorial genres, and I do not think it is incidental that both these artists are women, although I would not press the matter of gender too far. Their eagerness to paint it all—city and country, still life and landscape, themselves and their friends—redresses an imbalance. Matthiasdottir and Lyons want to engage with the pictorial structures through which such subjects have been shaped by mostly male artists in the past, so that feminism is rapidly subsumed in formalism, and the large public problem in the particular personal one.

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III.

This autumn, amid the grip of financial panic and the exhilaration of the presidential election, there has been no lack of concentrated, significant shows of modern masters in New York. The Morandi retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and "Joan Miró: Painting and Anti-Painting 1927–1937" at the Museum of Modern Art have provided triumphant demonstrations of the power of private feeling to sustain itself in the face of public life. Morandi and Miró were born three years apart, in 1890 and 1893, and they both became artists of originality in the years after World War I, when Cubism and abstract art were already established facts. Although each of these men invented images that look like nothing ever painted before, their allegiance was always to the imperatives of their own imaginations, rather than to some overarching idea about the development of art. For both Morandi and Miró, avant-gardism signified not so much a rejection of a public consensus as an insistence that the artist must challenge himself. And so their evolution was non-linear, a play of internal forces—which in Morandi's case meant that flatness and volume, naturalism and anti-naturalism, became possibilities forever alive, forever in competition. As for Miró, the show at the Modern reveals an artist who also saw his art in terms of competing forces—complication and simplification, traditional materials and untraditional—which were marshaled not as grand historical imperatives but as inclinations to be explored by a singular personality.

Giorgio Morandi, *Still Life,* 1956

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Anne Umland, the curator of the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, has shown a fine sensitivity to the paradoxes of Miró's career. One of the most vexatious questions raised by the modern movement is what artists such as Picasso, Miró, and Mondrian meant when they spoke of violent artistic change, as they did from time to time in interviews, statements, and letters. Such pronouncements, often taken out of context, have been marshaled by art historians to prove that painting was a dying form by 1925, and that the triumph of environmental art, site-specific art, process art, and conceptual art was in fact an inevitability. What Umland suggests about Miró's interest in anti-painting or the assassination of painting is that for him it was an inclination among other inclinations, one aspect of a more complex and multi-directional psychology.

In this superb show we are confronted, in the first gallery, with the startlingly stripped-down paintings done in 1927, where Miró proves, more convincingly than any artist ever would again, how little it takes to make a powerful painting. Here we see only bare canvas, a few lines, a few patches of color, perhaps an elegantly scrawled word or two. The fascinating thing is that almost immediately afterward, in 1928, Miró was painting his variations on Dutch genre scenes of the seventeenth century, deliciously colored and complexly patterned compositions that are among the most visually intricate achievements of his career. For Miró, anti-painting was a demand not of history but of his own psyche. Modernity was, as much as anything else, an invitation to inwardness, an invitation to exit history and drop through the trapdoor of the imagination into an ever-deepening investigation of the self. In the later decades of his long life, Miró would become a sort of international ambassador of the modern movement, beloved everywhere; but at his most audaciously personal, in the Dutch interiors of 1928 or the "Constellations" that he did in 1941, he was, as much as Morandi, one of the solitary dreamers of twentieth-century art.

Morandi and Miró were radicals in the sense that they were extreme individualists, and as much as Morandi's bottles and Miró's personages might be assimilated as emblems of an age, they remain private avowals. The Morandi retrospective at the Metropolitan, keenly awaited by his many admirers in New York, where there has not been a museum show of his work in decades, cannot be said to be entirely a success: the paintings are exhibited under artificial light in the awkward corridor-like spaces of the Lehman Wing. The installation at the Metropolitan distorts Morandi's colors and hardens his delicate brushwork. The retrospective has inspired some half-dozen smaller shows in New York, and a number of these, such as the group of etchings at Pace Prints and an anthology at Lucas Schoormans, have a four-square elegance lacking at the Metropolitan. But having taken those failings into account, we are left with the enormousness of this man's achievement.

No artist before Morandi ever gave such earth-shattering importance to such slight shifts in color, shape, and interval. No artist discovered more subtly different grays (rose, green, blue, yellow) or more ways to vary the attack and the density and the weight of a brushstroke. To say that Morandi was attentive to the still-life objects that he studied year after year does not even begin to describe the quality of his work. With Morandi, it is not the attention to the objects that counts so much as the attention that he gives to his own attention—a self-awareness so overpowering that it sometimes trumps the facts before his eyes, leading him into an abstraction of reality that has less to do with seeing than with the idea or the experience of sight.

Both the Morandi and the Miró exhibitions have set me to thinking about another modern artist who refused to fit into any historical pattern—of Balthus, whose centenary we are (or should be)

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celebrating. In 1938, Balthus completed a portrait of Miró and his daughter Dolores that used to be almost always on display at the Museum of Modern Art. And visitors to the Morandi show at the Metropolitan can see, nearby in the Lehman Collection, the magnificent Balthus nude from 1955, a study of a young woman in profile, standing before a mantelpiece on which is displayed a blue pitcher that I am convinced is Balthus's homage to the Italian master. Balthus is also included in the salute to Philippe de Montebello that is currently a major attraction at the Metropolitan. One gallery is dominated by *The Mountain* (1937), Balthus's most elaborate figure composition. And this serves to remind us that it was in 1984 that the Metropolitan gave New York its first Balthus retrospective in a generation, which was almost universally panned by the critics.

Balthus, who died in 2001, is not discussed much just now—he is punished, or so I believe, for his indomitable individualism. Why do the same critics and gallerygoers who celebrate every sexual gambit or innuendo in a painting by Eric Fischl or John Currin or Lisa Yuskavage turn into a bunch of evangelical moralists when they talk about Balthus? The difference, I think, is that sexuality in Fischl, Currin, and Yuskavage is always presented as a sort of ironic comment on current fashions, whereas Balthus makes it perfectly clear that his thoughts are his alone, that he will experience sexuality in his own way. He represents his eccentricities not as public ironies but as private certainties. And the gambles that he takes—in his subject matter, his stylistic shifts, the bewildering range of allusions—still leave the public feeling uneasy to a degree that Morandi, or for that matter Miró, never will.

I am not especially troubled that Balthus is only dimly understood by even the most educated museumgoers. I have never expected art to grip the public imagination in the way that a precipitous drop in the stock market or the emergence of a new national leader is likely to do. The arts have a unique and very distinct part to play in the life of a society, a role as necessary as it is elusive. One of the great failings of our cultural life is that so few people in positions of power grasp any longer the critical effect that poetry and painting and music, even when they are appreciated by only a relatively small segment of the population, can ultimately have on the population as a whole. Too many people have forgotten that the private life of art must always be a matter of public concern.

So let us remember that 2008 marks the hundredth anniversary of the birth of a great artist who from time to time represented himself in his own paintings with his back to the viewer. Looking at those curious self-portraits in *Le Passage du Commerce Saint-André* and *The Painter and His Model*, it is not difficult to imagine that the artist is expressing his reluctance to engage with the public. I think that Balthus is reticent precisely because he loves the public, because he respects the privacy of the spectator's feelings and wants the spectator to respect his. This is a paradox that does not much interest the art world. But then it has always fallen to the artists, and not to the art world, to sustain the real life of art. ◆

Anthony Grafton
MEIN BUCH

HITLER'S PRIVATE LIBRARY: THE BOOKS THAT SHAPED HIS LIFE
By Timothy W. Ryback
(Knopf, 304 pp., $24.95)

Few buildings on Capitol Hill are grander than the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress, with its great stairway, pillared façade, and magnificent domed reading room. And few rooms in that building seem more ordinary, even banal, than the rare book storage area where 1,200 books from the collection of Adolf Hitler stand tightly packed on steel shelves. Along with another eighty items in the Brown University Library and scattered texts elsewhere, these are the modest remains of the more than sixteen thousand books that Hitler assembled in his residence in Munich, in the Reichskanzlei in Berlin, and in his villa on the Obersalzberg in Bavaria, near Berchtesgaden. Like the Thousand-Year Empire, Hitler's imposing collections proved considerably more fragile than he expected. Even before the Führer died, American and Russian soldiers were packing his library and taking it home, bit by bit. Some came as single spies, like the young lieutenant who brought a much-thumbed copy of Henry Ford's *My Life and Work* back from Munich to New York, where he sold it at Scribner's. Others came in battalions, especially the Soviet "trophy brigade" that took the entire ten-thousand-volume collection from Berlin to Moscow, where it has not been seen since the early 1990s.

Only one large segment of the collection—three thousand books hidden in beer crates in a Bavarian salt mine—remained intact after the war ended. Members of the U.S. Army's Twenty-First Counterintelligence Corps concluded, after what they called a "hasty inspection of the scattered books," that the collection "was noticeably lacking in literature and almost totally devoid of drama and poetry." Worse still, "none of the books examined gave the appearance of extensive use. They had no marginal notes or underlinings." Hans Beilhack, reporting on the collection in November 1946 for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, noted contemptuously that the "library itself, seen as a whole, is only interesting because it is the library of a 'great' statesman and yet so uninteresting. It is the typical library of a dilettante."

Once the books reached Washington, Arnold Jacobius, then an intern and later an expert on the Weimar journalist Kurt Tucholsky, made a more detailed report to Frederick Goff, the head of rare books at the Library of Congress. Even he detected "little in the way of marginal notes, autographs or other similar features of interest," and at his suggestion most of the books, the ones that bore no signs of direct use, were merged into the library's general collection or sold as duplicates. Safely stored in Washington, even the books that the library kept and set apart attracted little attention. Many years ago, a librarian pointed them out to me as we hurried from one collection of incunabula to another: so far as he knew, no one had yet studied them. (In fact, some scholars had—notably Gerhard Weinberg and Robert Waite; but more than half of them remained uncatalogued as late as 2001.)

In the last twenty years or so, scholars in many fields of the humanities have realized that books, when studied as material objects as well as texts, can tell many stories about their owners. Like travelers in the woods, those who buy and read books leave tracks for scholars to read. Substantive (and legible) marginal notes and scrawled underlinings in pencil, fine bindings and tattered paper wrappers—all have something to tell us about those who saw them as appropriate ways of personalizing and responding to a particular book. Historians of the book—many of

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whom do their research at the Library of Congress and the Folger Library around the corner—have traced the development of such devices as the "manicule," the little pointing hand which, when drawn in a margin, indicated that a reader found a passage important, and which, as William H. Sherman has shown in his absorbing *Used Books: Marking Readers in Renaissance England*, was one of many readers' practices that survived the transition from script to print.

This material turn in the realm of the intellect has brought great benefits. In particular, it has provided a forum in which literary scholars, art historians, and historians can all work together, something that seemed to have disappeared in the age of theory. The close study of how books were made and marketed, catalogued and read, as these scholars have shown, provides us with a new method for tracing the ways in which the thought of a philosopher or the work of a writer took shape, and how in turn important books were used, appropriated, and rejected by readers. And in this new climate, the interest of Hitler's once-neglected books became clear, and scholars began to look at the collection.

In 2001, Philipp Gassert and Daniel S. Mattern published a catalogue of Hitler's books in American collections, and a book-length study of the books in Washington by the Hungarian historian Ambrus Miskolczy appeared in 2003. Timothy Ryback's dramatic book takes us not just into Hitler's library, but also into the gritty material details of the books themselves. At one point he even recalls discovering in a particular book, "tucked in the crease between pages 160 and 161, a wiry inch-long black hair that appears to be from a moustache." Thanks to his imaginative research—and his willingness to investigate a very creepy subject—we come closer to one of the most elusive men ever to shape world history.

Walter Benjamin, who hovers over this book as a melancholy Jewish guardian angel, believed that a collection revealed something profound about the collector's mind and life: "ownership is the most intimate relationship one can have to objects. Not that they come alive in him; it is he who lives in them. So I have erected one of his dwellings, with books as the building stones, before you, and now he is going to disappear inside, as is only fitting." Hitler's dwelling in Washington, however, is a ruin. A lot of the books that probably mattered most to him are not there; and he neither bought nor, in many cases, even saw a good many of the books preserved there. Sometimes precise connections emerge from the details. At one point Ryback finds Hitler using one of his books on magic to annotate another. We realize that both books must have been on Hitler's desk, and in his hands, at the same time. But historians' gold of this kind turns up very rarely here. Instead Ryback's reconstruction is accomplished mostly by weaving back and forth among individual books and other records, from Hitler's own writings to contemporaries' memoirs, as he seeks to show us how books shaped one of the twentieth century's most terrible minds. His effort is worthwhile: one finishes this short, packed book with a firmer take on the sort of intellectual—or pseudo-intellectual—who persuaded the best-educated nation in Europe to make war on civilization and try to exterminate the Jews. But deep insights remain elusive.

Hitler admitted that he was "no writer." But he insisted, again and again, that he was a reader. As a young man he claimed, with an autodidact's exaggeration, that he had read widely in German literature and philosophy—even though he still misspelled Schopenhauer as "Schoppenhauer." These claims represented, at least in part, a defensive response to bourgeois politicians such as Otto Dickel, whom Hitler confronted and defeated early in his career—men who had enjoyed, if that is the right word, the rigors of the German *Gymnasium* and university, and who felt at home in the highly abstract world of German philosophy and social science. Hitler never climbed these heights himself. His copies of the German classics show few signs of use, and his writings show little evidence of acquaintance with them. The annotated draft typescript of *Mein Kampf* that Ryback examines, with its misspellings and its vague, awkward prose, shows just how little literary culture Hitler had—a point that impressed itself even on the loyalists who tried to edit the book, as well as on those who tried to read it once it was published.

Still, Hitler read a great deal during the years when he rose to power. Walking the crowded, lively streets of Munich, he regularly stopped and shopped in his favorite used-book stores—so often, in fact, that he spent much of his income there. When Hitler became head of the Nazi Party, he had a list of recommended reading printed on party membership cards. While serving his time in prison after the Beer Hall Putsch, he withdrew from politics far more wholeheartedly than the soft conditions of his sentence required so that he could read and write. And the books and information that he amassed in the 1920s and 1930s served him directly in later years. A passionate collector of all sorts of texts on warfare, from strategic theories, military histories, and memoirs to handbooks of ships and tanks, Hitler read them with close attention. He amassed a detailed knowledge of everything from the doctrines of Clausewitz to the calibers of specific weapons, which came in handy again and again when he argued with the obdurate members of the German General Staff during World War II.

As head of state, Hitler continued to collect. Friends and admirers, such as Leni Riefenstahl and Sven Hedin, sent him their publications with flattering inscriptions. So did cities, companies, and publishers. More remarkable, he continued to read much—though hardly all—of what came in. Late at night on the Obersalzberg, Hitler read for hours a time, sometimes until dawn. He worked in his study, outside of which hung a sign that demanded ABSOLUTE SILENCE, reading with intense concentration—so intense that he became furious one night when Eva Braun interrupted him, and sent her packing, red-faced, with a "tirade." At breakfast, as Traudl Junge, his last surviving secretary, recalled to Ryback, he "would reprise his previous night's reading in extensive, often tedious detail." Even at the end, as a photograph of the Berlin bunker shows, unidentified thick books took up some of the scarce space in his tiny bedroom.

What could reading do—what did it do—for Hitler? The mere fact that he marked many of his books, Ryback points out, is striking. After all, Hitler was "a man who famously seemed never to listen to anyone, for whom conversation was a relentless tirade, a ceaseless monologue." Yet as a reader he would stop "to engage with the text, to underline words and sentences, to mark entire paragraphs, to place an exclamation point beside one passage, a question mark beside another, and quite frequently an emphatic series of parallel lines in the margin alongside a particular passage." Hard though they are to interpret—the fuller annotations found in some of the volumes do not seem to come from Hitler himself—these traces show a man listening and responding. Could they offer a path to that mysterious mind, more concealed than revealed by the thousands of volumes of memoirs and commentary that never seem to penetrate Hitler's shell?

Hitler's own words make clear—clearer, in fact, than the surviving volumes—just

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how much some writers meant to him. His lifelong favorites—leatherbound copies of which he kept in the study of his alpine villa—ranged from the Western adventure novels of Karl May to the plays of Shakespeare. May's novels, from *The Ride Across the Desert* on, "overwhelmed" Hitler as a boy, claiming his attention so powerfully that his grades suffered "a noticeable decline." During the war, Hitler told his generals to study May's books, and even had a special edition issued for soldiers at the front. He considered Winnetou, the Indian chief of May's tales, a master of "tactical finesse and circumspection," and a model for his own love of cunning tactics and surprises. Reading at night, he told Albert Speer, "when faced by seemingly hopeless situations, he would still reach for these stories," because "they gave him courage like works of philosophy for others or the Bible for elderly people."

Shakespeare seemed to him much greater than the classic German writers of the eighteenth century. After all, Shakespeare had brought the imperishable character of Shylock to the stage, whereas Lessing had created Nathan the Wise, the Jew who taught Christians, Muslims, and Jews a lesson of tolerance. Hitler quoted Shakespeare as more highly educated Germans quoted Goethe, threatening opponents: "We will meet again at Philippi." This material, fascinating as it is, comes not from the books preserved in Washington, but from records of Hitler's speeches and conversations. Though the handsome morocco-bound set of Shakespeare from Obersalzberg is now in Washington, it was printed in 1925—too late to be the German edition that imprinted "To be or not to be" and "We will meet again at Philippi" on Hitler's mind.

In some cases, Ryback derives fascinating and suggestive material from the books that he examines. On November 22, 1915, while serving as a message runner on the Western Front, Hitler bought a guide to the architecture of Berlin by the critic Max Osborn, a Jewish intellectual who covered the Western Front for the prestigious *Vossische Zeitung* while Hitler was stationed there, vividly recording the horror, and the increasing savagery, of the war. Ryback observes that "in November 1915, for a frontline corporal to pay four marks for a book on cultural treasures of Berlin, when cigarettes, schnapps, and women were readily available for more immediate and palpable distraction, can be seen as an act of aesthetic transcendence." This impression is confirmed by the thumbprints that appear beside Osborn's reproductions of works of art by Rubens and Botticelli, and which suggest that Hitler, who practiced drawing when he had the chance, still hoped for a career as a painter.

More striking are the passages in which Osborn condemns the wild eclecticism of much Berlin architecture, the "orgies of an unspeakable debasement in taste," and singles out for praise certain clear exceptions. Osborn admired the martial, Prussian qualities of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's Neue Wache on Unter den Linden, a monument to those who died for Prussia in the wars of liberation against France, and the brilliance with which Karl Gotthard Langhans had crowned the Brandenburg Gate, at the other end of Berlin's great ceremonial boulevard, with the goddess of Victory. Evidently Hitler took a special interest in the long chapter, its margins smudged, bent, and spotted with paraffin, in which Osborn denounced the second-rate artistic tastes of the Prussian hero Frederick the Great.

Ryback notes that Hitler, who explored Berlin while on leave during the war, agreed with Osborn in condemning the city's architecture. In later life, of course, Hitler planned to transform the city into a monumental, stylistically coherent capital to be called Germania, and he and Speer realized parts of the plan in the Olympic Stadium and Chancery. Osborn, whose work was banned and who emigrated to America, presumably did not admire the direction in which Hitler took his rather conventional aesthetic nationalism. But the case seems clear: reading Osborn sharpened Hitler's sense of how to read Berlin—and very likely inspired him to abandon his earlier taste for architectural eclecticism. To the young Hitler, Vienna's Ringstrasse, with its Baroque Opera and Greek Houses of Parliament, Renaissance Burgtheater, and neo-Gothic Rathaus, seemed "like an enchantment out of the Thousand and One Nights." Hitler the veteran of war and reader of Osborn wanted something different: pure "Germanic-northern *Ur*-forms" that still, somehow, derived from ancient Greece.

Equally fascinating is Ryback's account of the short book on Alfred Graf von Schlieffen (famous for his plan for victory over France), written by the count's personal physician, that was given to Hitler in 1940 by Artur "Willy" Kannenberg, a member of his inner circle. From the Fraktur type used on its cover to its anecdotes of Schlieffen's kindness to defeated French generals, the book was clearly designed to showcase the Prussian virtues: courage, austerity, tradition, and the willingness to retreat for strategic purposes. But Kannenberg, whom Hitler first met at a restaurant and treated as a sort of court jester, transformed the book, as Ryback shows, with his presentation note on the front cover: "Dedicated to my Führer. Motto: 'one way or another.' Sieg Heil, Kannenberg, 19.5.1940." Celebrating ruthlessness, treating Hitler with adulation, Kannenberg quoted Hitler to Hitler: "one way or another," "*so oder so*," was one of his master's favorite sayings, like "*wenn schon, denn schon*"—"if you're going to do it, do it."

Hitler read the book as aggressively as Kannenberg's note suggested he should. As he went through the fourth chapter, on Schlieffen's campaign in France, he pondered and marked the passages in which Schlieffen warned against waging a two-front war against France and England to the west and Russia to the east. In the end, to be sure, Germany would have to conquer all of its enemies. But Schlieffen argued that along the way, "as the Great King [Frederick] has taught us, we must be ready to sacrifice even so rich a province as East Prussia, in order to concentrate all our forces where we seek a decision"—that is, in the west. As Hitler went through these passages, he may well have entertained his first thoughts, as Ryback suggests, about the invasion of Russia, which he would begin to discuss in July 1940. The pencil lines in this brochure, less than a hundred pages long, seem to reveal the origins of that *arcanum imperii* which would, in the end, destroy Hitler's own empire.

For the most part, the marked books show that Hitler read not to discover but to confirm what he already knew. In a famous passage in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler made clear that he rejected the scholar's deferential approach to texts. Intellectuals read supinely, allowing books to lead them: "Naturally, I understand by 'reading' something other than that which the average member of the so-called 'intelligentsia' understands," he wrote. "I know people who 'read' an endless amount, who go from book to book, from letter to letter, yet I would not want to call them 'well-read.' They possess an abundance of 'knowledge,' only their brain does not understand how to process and organize the material it has taken on board." Such readers "lack the art of being able to divide the valuable from the valueless in a book." In the end, Hitler explained, "reading is not something we carry out for its own sake, but an instrument used for a purpose," a "tool and a building material that one needs for one's calling in life."

Rather than simply storing materials "according to the structure of the book

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or the chronology of one's memory," one should fit each important passage, Hitler wrote, "like a piece in a mosaic into its orderly place in the general worldview: it is precisely in this way that it will help the reader to form a picture in his head." The reader who fails to follow this rule "thinks he really knows all that is serious, thinks he understands something from life, and is in possession of knowledge. Yet with each new addition he becomes increasingly alienated from the world, until he ends up either in a sanatorium, or in parliament as a 'politician.'" By contrast, the reader who follows Hitler's ruthless, pragmatic hermeneutics will use texts as quarries, finding in them exactly the stones to fill particular gaps or the tools to do particular jobs.

Hitler read, in other words, as he talked: not to uncover new facts or ideas but to validate what he already thought. That explains why he carefully went through an edition of the scholarly anti-Semite Paul Lagarde's *German Essays*, printed as late as 1934 by J. F. Lehmann, as well as several of the famous works on racial types by Hans F. K. Günther, known as "Rassengünther," a professor at Jena and one of the founders of German racial science and legislation, also published by Lehmann. These texts told Hitler nothing that he did not already know. Hitler did not need Rassengünther to show him what Jews looked like, or Lagarde to tell him that Germany could never assimilate its Jews, or to recommend that they be transplanted to Palestine, or to caution him that the Jews, formed by the Talmud, were too tough for Germans to oppose—or to condemn the particular offenses that Jews committed against German identity, as when they "lay claim to the honorable German name while constructing the most sacred sites one has in a Moorish style in order not to forget that one is a Semite, an Asian, a foreigner." He had long since drawn his own conclusions about the New Synagogue in the Oranienburgerstrasse and its congregation.

Still, the bent pages and the flexible spines of these books indicate that Hitler read them often. In them, Ryback shows, "we can observe the application of Hitler's reading technique in all its selective intensity"—watch his pencil, following his eye across the page, underlining passages, entering occasional exclamation points and question marks, above all drawing the lines that marked stones useable for his mosaics. The new position of the reader made his books yield something they had not provided before. In 1934–1935, Hitler was head of state and possessed dictatorial powers. Reading as a leader, a ruler, he found in Günther's familiar images and Lagarde's familiar sentiments not the elements of a political program but the beginnings of a public policy. "A penciled mark can become state doctrine": Hitler's penciled marks became part of the Nuremberg Laws, promulgated in September 1935.

Ryback's useful book brings us a little closer to the mind of the monster. But it could have revealed more than it does. Far too often Ryback interrupts his analysis of the books and their contents, printed and handwritten, to tell us about his own adventures in researching them: only a few of these peeps into his workshop clarify the material. Too seldom does he take the opportunities this material offers to penetrate more deeply into Hitler's psyche. In a long chapter, Ryback describes the surviving esoteric and spiritualist volumes that formed a substantial part of Hitler's collection: works by thinkers now forgotten, such as Ernst Schertel and Maximilian Riedel. They offered elaborate analyses and complex charts of the relation between mind and spirit. More striking, they celebrated those individuals of "imaginative power," who could concentrate their spirits and conceive "explosive, dynamite-like" ideas that had the impact of an avalanche: ideas so powerful that they were beyond such soft, old-fashioned categories as good and evil, true and false, and could transform the world.

Ryback shows that Hitler called special attention to these passages in his books. They underpinned his own sense of himself as a new man, spiritually able to call down destruction on Europe's corrupt civilization. This was the vision that Hitler revealed in part to the very civilized League of Nations high commissioner to the free city of Danzig, Carl J. Burckhardt, during the critical days of August 1939, and in whole to his generals when he ordered them, two weeks later, to invade Poland. At the core of Hitler's understanding of himself and his mission, the historian finds "less a distillation of the philosophies of Schopenhauer or Nietzsche than a dime-store theory cobbled together from cheap, tendentious paperbacks and esoteric hardcovers."

True enough—and yet, as Corinna Treitel showed in her excellent book *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the German Modern*, it is wrong to dismiss the esoteric strains in German thought in the early decades of the twentieth century simply because they now seem laughable. In a time when all values—from the objective ones of natural science to the traditional ones of the established churches—came into question, many Germans, some of them very well-born and educated, found more than cheap potato soup for the soul in these pursuits. Occultism offered new spiritual revelations to replace the old, and new scientific revelations that made for dazzling séances, and new insight (or so many serious artists thought) into the nature of the creative unconscious. The rise of occultism in all its forms, from good old-fashioned astrology to the spiritualism nourished by the war's vast toll of death, marked a distinctive part of Germany's strange path to modernity. Yet esoteric thinkers differed on many points, and Nazi officials took a wide range of positions on them before they finally decided, late in the war, to crush them. By confronting the thinkers Hitler used with close attention to detail, as Treitel did—and by drawing on Treitel's own rich book—Ryback could have done more than condemn Hitler's esoteric interests as cheap and silly. He could have traced them to their precise roots, and told us, as he does not, whether Hitler's response to them was distinctive, and if so how.

Hitler was far from the only twentieth century Big Man who claimed to be a Big Thinker and a Big Reader. Every good research library has the forty-four-volume *Opera Omnia* of Benito Mussolini, whose beautiful, eloquent Italian Hitler admired, but felt unable to emulate—not to mention the collected works of Joseph Stalin, some fourteen volumes in the Red Star Press edition published at London in the 1970s, or the lucubrations of Mao Zedong and Enver Hoxha or Kim Il Sung. How, one wonders, did Hitler's ways of reading, citing, and using texts resemble, or differ from, those of the other Great Dictators of his time? Or those of the other Nazi leaders? Ryback does not ask—much less answer—these intriguing questions.

This book sticks too close to Hitler, in the end, to tell us as much as it could have. Still, *Hitler's Private Library* offers clear proof, if any was needed, that Hitler's worldview did not represent, as American propaganda claimed, the culmination of centuries of German thought. It is in narrower, more crooked corridors of the great edifice of the German intellect—the intellectual *Sonderweg* that Fritz Stern explored so well half a century ago, and to which Corinna Treitel and others have more recently returned—that historians will capture the secrets of Hitler's mind. Timothy Ryback has not taken the grim trip himself: but others will, and his work will help to guide them. ◆

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Ruth Franklin

ENSLAVEMENTS

A MERCY
By Toni Morrison
(Knopf, 167 pp., $23.95)

Last spring, a mysterious object was discovered beneath a street in Annapolis, Maryland. According to *The New York Times*, the clay "bundle" was about "the size and shape of a football [and] filled with about 300 pieces of metal and a stone axe, whose blade sticks out of the clay, pointing skyward." Anthropologists determined that it was a ritual object, perhaps more than three hundred years old, combining African religious practices with local materials. Originally displayed "in the open for all to see," it was later buried when the street was paved with modern materials.

The article describing the find appeared just a few weeks before Toni Morrison's eerily resonant new novel, which, like the bundle itself, is a smallish object stuffed to its bindings with bits and pieces representing the way life was once lived in the region then known as "Mary's Land," held together by a waft of folklore and capped by a sharp and indignant blade. Starting with her first novel, *The Bluest Eye*, in 1970, Morrison has devoted her work to excavating the lives of black people in America, but her recent books have seemed increasingly narrow in scope and in feeling. Not *A Mercy*: a slender novel that plunges resoundingly into the pre-history of black America to tell the interlocking stories of three slavewomen and their mistress, it is as linguistically rich and emotionally wrenching as her best work of the 1970s and 1980s.

The year is 1682, and the setting is somewhere in what would become Maryland or Virginia, near the coast. First under Swedish and then Dutch control, the territory is fungible. "There had never been much point in knowing who claimed this or that terrain; this or another outpost," thinks Jacob Vaark, a Dutch trader making his way to a luncheon at the home of one of his planters. "Other than certain natives, to whom it all belonged, from one year to another any stretch might be claimed by a church, controlled by a Company, or become the private property of a royal's gift to a son or a favorite.... Turtles had a life span longer than towns." While claims to land may be "ad hoc," claims to people are not. The planter has lost much of his income with the recent shipwreck of a boatload of slaves he was expecting, and he wishes to repay his debt to Jacob with slaves from his household. At first Jacob demurs; but when pressed, he asks for the cook, whom he can tell is the master's concubine and favorite, knowing that he will refuse to give her up.

But Jacob is put on the spot when the woman, holding her infant son, pleads with him to take her daughter instead, a little girl of about five who hides behind her mother's skirt. This moment—the mother's offering of her little girl, whose name is Florens, and Jacob's reluctant acceptance of her—is the novel's crucial episode. It is repeated three times. We hear about it first from Florens, who narrates alternating chapters in her sometimes inexplicably idiosyncratic voice, flecked with words borrowed from Portuguese (she awkwardly uses the phrase "a minha mãe" to mean "my mother") and happily unobservant of the rules of grammar:

> I see it forever. Me watching, my mother listening, her baby boy on her hip. Senhor is not paying the whole amount he owes to Sir. Sir saying he will take instead the woman and the girl, not the baby boy and the debt is gone. A minha mãe begs no. Her baby boy is still at her breast. Take the girl, she says, my daughter, she says. Me. Me. Sir agrees and changes the balance due.

Though Florens will be happy in Jacob's house, where she is treated with kindness by the trader's wife Rebekka and by a slave named Lina, the memory of her mother's rejection will always torture her.

We hear the story next in the voice of Jacob, who is morally repelled by slavery and mostly refuses to take part in it: "Flesh was not his commodity." Yes, he has accumulated a couple of slaves, but he thinks of them as Rebekka's "helpers" rather than as property. One of them, called Sorrow, he more or less adopted after she washed up on a nearby shore; the other, a Native American named Lina, he purchased "outright and deliberately, but she was a woman, not a child." Lina and Rebekka, left to fend for themselves on the farm while Jacob travels, soon developed a relationship of almost-equals: "Not only because somebody had to pull the wasp sting from the other's arm. Not only because it took two to push the cow away from the fence. Mostly because neither knew precisely what they were doing or how." He decides to accept Florens not primarily because of her use value, but because she is the same age as his daughter, recently killed by a horse, and he hopes her presence might help to console Rebekka.

Especially after *Beloved*, which relentlessly—and often excessively—depicted the brutality of slaveowners on a plantation ironically named Sweet Home, it is reassuring to see some "Europes," as the Dutch settlers are called here, who are compassionate (at least within the bounds of what is permissible in their world) rather than savage for its own sake. If Jacob takes on Florens partially because "if she got kicked in the head by a mare, the loss would not rock Rebekka so," it is nonetheless clear that the slaves in the Vaark household are treated with respect and sympathy. Scully, a young man who does occasional work for the Vaarks, believes that Lina's loyalty to her owners is not "submission ... it was a sign of her own self-worth—a sort of keeping one's word. Honor, perhaps." But even the most humane of slaveowners cannot escape the stringencies of the relationship between owner and property: later Scully will realize that "the family they had imagined they had become was false."

In *A Mercy*, more than in any of Morrison's previous books, slavery is as much a metaphor for the human condition as it is a historical fact. The novel is an extended consideration of the many ways in which people deliberately or unconsciously assert ownership over each other: spouses, lovers, mothers and children. The language in which Jacob considers his requirements for a wife—"an unchurched woman of childbearing age, obedient but not groveling, literate but not proud, independent but nurturing"—is a slightly more tender version of the language of slave advertisements, as Morrison represents them here: "Girl or woman that is handy in the kitchen, sensible, speaks good English, complexion between yellow and black," or "Hardy female, Christianized and capable in all matters domestic available for exchange of goods or specie." (The latter was an advertisement for Lina.) Later we learn that Rebekka's mother thought of her marriage to Jacob as a "sale," since Jacob had

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emphasized "reimbursement" for the requirements for his future bride's journey, including clothing and expenses. And at the planter's house Jacob, faced with the man's insipid, preening wife, finds that "his own Rebekka seemed ever more valuable to him."

Eros has always been fraught in Morrison's fiction, owing to the tension between her vision of the woman as free spirit, taking her pleasure from men without regard for marriage or other societal strictures, and what she presents as the inevitable reality that love itself is a form of bondage. (The word "free" is always a loaded one in Morrison's work.) In *Sula*, Hannah Peace, Sula's mother, "simply refused to live without the attentions of a man," and offers herself freely (that word again!), often on a flour sack in the pantry, to any man who pleases her. Her behavior teaches Sula that "sex was pleasant and frequent, but otherwise unremarkable"; and Morrison notes in her foreword to a new edition of the novel that "female freedom always means sexual freedom, even when—especially when—it is seen through the prism of economic freedom." But when Sula later behaves with an even more flagrant disregard for convention, she is ostracized by the town's women, who whisper rumors that she is a devil. She dies impoverished, in pain, alone.

The overlaps between the language of love and the language of ownership are undeniable, from the declaration of mutual ownership "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" from the biblical Song of Solomon (which is also the title of Morrison's best novel) to the conception of sex as "taking" or "possession." But while such tropes can appear to be innocent and even romantic, what Morrison is out to demonstrate is that slavery of any kind, even the enslavement in passion, is dangerous to the soul. Florens will discover this when she falls in love with a blacksmith, a free man who comes to work on a new house that Jacob, envying the grand mansion of the planter he visited, decides to build. Their relationship is unconstrainedly erotic: as Florens watches him at work, sweat runs down his back and "I have shock at myself for wanting to lick there.... My mouth is open, my legs go softly and the heart is stretching to break." Florens's attraction to the man (he is never named) is depicted as a force of nature. "I wilt when you go and am straight when Mistress sends me to you," she says at one point. (The portions of the book that she narrates are all addressed to him.) Lina tries again to caution her: "You are one leaf on his tree." "No," Florens replies. "I am his tree."

But she is not, as the book's terrible climax makes plain. When Rebekka comes down with smallpox, she sends Florens on a mission to find the blacksmith, who has since moved on, and bring him back to heal her. On the journey, Florens catches sight of a stag walking in the woods, and tastes something like freedom for the first time: "I wonder what else the world may show me. It is as though I am loose to do what I choose, the stag, the wall of flowers. I am a little scare of this looseness. Is that how free feels? I don't like it. I don't want to be free of you because I am live only with you." This surrender will be her undoing. After she reaches the blacksmith, she discovers that he has taken in a child, a foundling discovered in a cart with his father dead on the horse. He leaves her to mind the boy while he goes to heal Rebekka. Fearing that the blacksmith has already transferred his affections to the child, Florens becomes mad with jealousy—"I can never not have you have me"—and in her rage she lashes out against him. When the blacksmith returns and finds them, he hits her and sends her away. Why? she asks.

"Because you are a slave." ...
"Sir makes me that." ...
"No. You have become one."
"How?
"Your head is empty and your body is wild."
"I am adoring you."
"And a slave to that too."
"You alone own me."
"Own yourself, woman, and leave us be."

Of course, there are crucial differences between Florens's romantic metaphors of ownership ("You alone own me") and the actualities of slavery. The lover's desire to posses the beloved—a desire that is one of love's most disturbingly primal sensations—does not deny the beloved his or her volition, does not reduce his or her humanity. More, the beloved may consent to and even welcome such assertions of mastery. In passion, the roles of master and slave are not fixed, and may be rejected altogether.

But in consent lies danger. At the end of the novel, Florens's mother gives her own version of the story, and her message to her daughter transforms slavery from the political to the personal: "To be given dominion over another is a hard thing; to wrest dominion over another is a wrong thing; to give dominion of yourself to another is a wicked thing." Notice that the first scenario, which describes Jacob's acceptance of Florens, is "hard," while the second, the act of the slave-trader, is "wrong," but only the third is "wicked." Submitting to slavery—to metaphorical slavery, at least—turns out to be more dangerous than perpetrating it.

It is not entirely accurate to say that Morrison is using slavery as a metaphor for the human condition. She is using it as a metaphor for the female condition. Rebekka, en route to the New World, finds an unexpected solidarity in her female companions on the boat, all of them whores, thieves, or other pariahs. Later, as she lies feverishly in bed, fighting her illness and mourning her lost babies, the voices of the women on the ship return to her, consoling her with their stories. As she listens, she contemplates the plight of Job. Wasn't that what his comforters did, she thinks—"they told him about themselves, and when he felt even worse, he got an answer from God saying, Who on earth do you think you are?" All Job truly wanted, she realizes, was God's attention: "simply to catch His eye." But he was a man. Would a female Job dare to offer up such a request? "And if, having done so, and He deigned to remind her of how weak and ignorant she was, where was the news in that? What shocked Job into humility and renewed fidelity was the message a female Job would have known and heard every minute of her life."

Morrison has often made the women in her novels into female Jobs, and as they suffer torment upon torment—rape, abuse, abandonment—one sometimes wonders how much they can be expected to take, and how much relentless pain the reader can be expected to bear, before the mind is numbed out of all understanding. In *Beloved* and some of her other novels, Morrison seemed almost to take a grisly delight in the savagery. Like many chronicles of the martyrdom of saints, her prose can become downright sadistic. In one of the most painful episodes in the new novel, Florens, midway through her journey to the blacksmith, seeks refuge for the night in a cottage inhabited by a widow and her daughter. The girl, she is startled to notice, is covered with fresh wounds, "dark blood beetling down her legs." The local men have accused her of being a demon, and since

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it is believed that demons do not bleed, her mother must continually open the wounds to prove that she is not.

A Mercy has its expected share of bloodshed, but here the violence, filtered through Florens's dreamy monologues, is almost minimalistic by comparison. The despair about the lot of women, though, is maximal. "Her prospects were servant, prostitute, wife, and although horrible stories were told about each of those careers, the last one seemed safest," Rebekka realizes on the ship. "The one where she might have children and therefore be guaranteed some affection." As hard as her married life turns out to be—she loses all four of her children in quick succession, followed by her husband—she is almost certainly right. After all, there are "restrictions" on wife-beating: "not after nine at night, with cause and not anger." (Presumably slaves and unmarried women can be beaten at any hour of the day, for any reason, in any mood.) And the metaphor of the tree appears again to describe the love between Rebekka and Jacob, although this time in terms of greater equality: "They leaned on each other root and crown."

But anyone with even a glimmer of familiarity with Morrison's fiction cannot read Rebekka's consoling thoughts about motherhood—"she might have children and therefore be guaranteed some affection"—without a shudder. In all of Morrison's work, there is no force so transformative or terrifying, no human relationship as deeply binding, and thus no potentially greater source of life's pain, as the love between mother and child. Fatherhood, in her world, is bizarrely—and tellingly—irrelevant.

Beloved is normally read as a novel about the horrors of slavery, with its graphic depiction of the white men's brutality and Sethe's desperate response, but it is also a novel about motherhood. By murdering her baby, Sethe frees her from life as a slave; but she cannot free herself from the bonds that connect her to this child, bonds that may even have the power to reach beyond the grave, and to which she, now living as a freedwoman, remains enslaved. In a monologue Sethe speaks to her dead daughter about her lover's response when he learned of her act. "Look how he ran when he found out about me and you in the shed," she says. "Too rough for him to listen to. Too thick, he said. My love was too thick." It is love, we are given to understand, that drove Sethe to murder—love that is presented in nearly erotic terms ("me and you in the shed"), love thick as blood, thick as rope, thick as the quicksand of the past.

In *A Mercy*, Sorrow, the novel's strangest and most ambiguous character, has what comes closest to a happy experience of motherhood: her first child, delivered prematurely, dies (or is left to die), but she gives birth easily to her second with the help of Scully and another farmhand, and afterward she renames herself "Complete." Rebekka is unhinged by the loss of her children; this once generous and practical woman turns bitter and withdrawn, and Scully remarks that she passes her days "with the joy of a clock." And the heart-wrenching choice that her mother is forced to make at the novel's start determines the course of Florens's life—not only circumstantially, as she takes her place within the Vaark household, but also emotionally. The trauma of her mother's rejection of her in favor of her little brother, the baby boy still nursing at her breast, is forever in the shadows of her mind, revealing itself at moments of anguish or fear.

"Mother hunger," Lina calls their longing: "to be one or have one." When Florens first comes to the Vaark home and sees that Sorrow is pregnant, she feels threatened: "Mothers nursing greedy babies scare me. I know how their eyes go when they choose. How they raise them to look at me hard, saying something I cannot here. Saying something important to me, but holding the little boy's hand." (Readers of *Beloved* will remember that there, too, nursing plays an important role as a symbol of the mother-child connection: what Sethe finds most terrible about her assault is that the men who attacked her took her milk.) And later, when Florens arrives at the blacksmith's hut and feels threatened by the boy he has taken in, the pain of that formative moment returns in a dream: "A minha mãe leans at the door holding her little boy's hand, my shoes in her pocket. As always she is trying to tell me something."

What Florens's mother was trying to tell her fills the last chapter of the novel. Her life story is, again, one of violent, vicious treatment by men: first she is brought from Africa to Barbados and gang-raped, then she is sold to the Portuguese trader, who, she worries, has already begun to show an interest in Florens. When she sees Jacob, she trusts him immediately: "There was no animal in his heart. . . . He did not want." She begged him to take her daughter because "I saw the tall man see you as a human child, not pieces of eight. I knelt before him. Hoping for a miracle. He said yes." In this way, an act that seemed horrible is redeemed. Like Sethe's murder of Beloved, it was a terrible demonstration of maternal love. The tragedy is not that it happened to Florens, but that she will never understand why.

One of the most beautifully restrained passages in *Beloved*—the prose of which, as in much of Morrison's fiction, has a tendency to overheat—comes just after Sethe, with the help of a white runaway, gives birth on the bank of a river:

> Spores of bluefern growing in the hollows along the riverbank float toward the water in silver-blue lines hard to see unless you are in or near them, lying right at the river's edge when the sunshots are low and drained. Often they are mistook for insects—but they are seeds in which the whole generation sleeps confident of a future. And for a moment it is easy to believe each one has one—will become all of what is contained in the spore: will live out its days as planned. This moment of certainty lasts no longer than that; longer, perhaps, than the spore itself.

This is the mother's dream, and perhaps the primary cruelty of slavery was the near-certainty that it would be thwarted. The children of slaves, needless to say, had little chance of fulfilling any kind of a future; and slave mothers could have no confidence that the babies to whom they gave birth would "become all of what is contained in the spore" or would "live out [their] days as planned." The moment of certainty, if it ever exists at all, is just a flicker. Sethe's mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, is able to keep only one of her eight children. Her two girls, "neither of whom had their adult teeth," were sold and taken away before she could even wave goodbye. "In all of Baby's life . . . men and women were moved around like checkers," Morrison writes in a passage that is one of the novel's most frequently quoted. "What she called the nastiness of life was the shock she received upon learning that nobody stopped playing checkers just because the pieces included her children."

Of course, this is not just a tragedy for women. Surely the six fathers of Baby Suggs's eight children grieved over their incapability to maintain ties to their offspring. Surely Halle, Sethe's husband, who had the misfortune of witnessing part of her assault, was devastated by it. But these men are absent. Morrison does not tell their stories. And by

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focusing so rhapsodically on the physical aspects of motherhood—pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding—she effectively excludes them from the process of having children. In *A Mercy*, similarly, it is only the women whose stories we learn. This may seem a kind of poetic justice for the hardships that they suffered, and we do occasionally enter the thoughts of the men in the novel; but there can be no denying that men—as true, formed characters, not as sexual objects or brutes—have often been a startling omission from the universe of Morrison's fiction. She has chosen to tell the stories of mothers, not fathers; and the choice feels vaguely ideological. The incomplete portrayal of men certainly damages many of her narratives.

If the tragedy of losing a child, through death or through circumstance, is not unique to women, Morrison wants to emphasize that for women it is more primal, which of course it has to be. It is women who carry babies, first in their wombs and then on their backs; it is women's bodies that nourish them, the breasts metamorphosing into a kind of second umbilical cord. "Men don't know nothing much, but they do know a suckling can't be away from its mother for long," Sethe's lover Paul D tells her. "Then they know what it's like to send your children off when your breasts are full," she retorts. A man can understand intellectually what this might be like, but he cannot feel the physical compulsion that draws a woman back to her nursing baby, a sensation so powerful that, years after weaning, just to think of it stirs a phantom ache in the breasts. That love is too thick, indeed. But by rendering her men anonymous, or by not showing comparable interest in them, Morrison skims too lightly over their suffering. By ignoring the full spectrum of human experience, she does an injustice to all her characters, male and female.

At the novel's end, we learn that there is a secret room in the house where Florens has used the tip of a nail to scratch her story upon the walls. Her intended reader is the blacksmith, of course. "If you are live or ever you heal you will have to bend down to read my telling, crawl perhaps in a few places. I apologize for the discomfort." *I apologize for the discomfort*: this is not Florens speaking, it is Morrison, coolly piercing the narration. Under almost any other circumstances, this would be a tonal flaw, a sign of the novelist's release of control. But Morrison seems to have done this intentionally, to startle the reader into paying extra attention to this line, which is a kind of ironic credo.

In fact, the writer is telling us, she sees no reason to apologize. Sometimes it hurts to read. Sometimes it hurts to write:

> There is no more room in this room. These words cover the floor. From now you will stand to hear me. The walls make trouble because lamplight is too small to see by. I am holding light in one hand and carving letters with the other. My arms ache but I have need to tell you this.... What will I do with my nights when the telling stops? Dreaming will not come again. Sudden I am remembering. You won't read my telling. You read the world but not the letters of talk. You don't know how to. Maybe one day you will learn. If so, come to this farm again, part the snakes in the gate you made, enter this big, awing house, climb the stairs and come inside this talking room in daylight. If you never read this, no one will. These careful words, closed up and wide open, will talk to themselves.

The first purpose of writing, we are told here, is the exorcism of pain. But more than that, the act also allows Florens to find her way back to herself. The evidence is in her speech. Throughout the book, she has addressed the blacksmith humbly as "you," never needing to use his name, the very terms of her address giving the sense of a person bowing in submission—wilting. But toward the end of this passage she straightens up, going so far as to issue a series of commands: "Come to this farm again ... climb the stairs and come inside." And in the last sentence he disappears entirely, leaving only her words.

It is a beautiful passage, in its vision and in its language, but there is something aesthetically and humanly limiting about the credo that it expresses. For the impulse to offer testimony—which is clearly what Florens is carving into the walls of her room—is essentially different from the drive to create literature. Testimony is particular, and unembarrassed by the specificity of a single individual's perspective; but literature must be less circumscribed—it must see more than one perspective, one wound. The purpose of testimony about atrocity is to bear witness to one's own suffering or to the suffering of others, so that it may be honored and commemorated. The purpose of literature is grander: not to edify, however darkly, or to establish a public cause, but to interpret the world in all its variousness and its complication.

In an interview published in *The Paris Review*, Morrison complained about critics who have asked her when she intends to write a novel about white people, as if it were "a kind of compliment" to suggest that she might be capable of doing so rather than limiting her scope to the stories of African Americans. It is indeed insulting to suggest that the lives and the emotions of black people are any less universal than the lives and the emotions of white people, as if a novel as rich and beautiful as *Sula* or *Song of Solomon* were somehow irrelevant to the concerns of whites simply because its characters are black. Likewise, it was insulting for John Updike, reviewing *A Mercy* in *The New Yorker*, to praise Morrison for producing "another installment of her noble and necessary fictional project of exposing the infamies of slavery and the hardships of being African-American." A black writer's work—any writer's work—does not have to prove itself "noble and necessary."

The horror of the central tragedy in *A Mercy*—the mother forced to choose between her children—is not limited to the world of slavery. It can be, and it has been, imagined in virtually any totalitarian setting: the Holocaust, the Cultural Revolution, Darfur. (Is slavery not a crude form of totalitarianism?) Likewise, there is surely no more universalizing experience than motherhood, which unites women regardless of their origins and their circumstances. And yet Morrison continues to insist upon her characters' separateness from "the center," as she puts it in the same interview, although the center has shifted: it is no longer white, but male. As long as she uses her lyrical and tormented novels as vehicles for the insistence on man's inhumanity to woman, her artistic achievement will continue to be interrupted by the testimonial groan. The bits and pieces of life should not be dominated by the grinding blade of the ax. ◆

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Caryl Phillips
EXILE ON MAIN STREET

THE WRITER AS MIGRANT
By Ha Jin
(University of Chicago Press,
112 pp., $14)

In Ha Jin's most recent novel, *A Free Life*, the acclaimed Chinese-American writer crossed the Pacific Ocean and rooted a work of fiction in American soil. It felt as if his fiction had finally caught up with his own life. Born Xuefei Jin in Liaoning in 1956, he joined the People's Liberation Army as a teenager and eventually attended Heilongjiang University, from which he graduated with a bachelor's degree in English, and then Shandong University, where he earned a master's degree in Anglo-American literature. In 1985, he left China and arrived at Brandeis University as a twenty-nine-year-old graduate student. He began a doctorate in English, but he dreamed of one day returning to China as a teacher or a translator and perhaps eventually becoming a writer. It was the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989 that convinced him, and many other Chinese students abroad, that a return to China was ill-advised, and so a decision was made to remain in the United States and to pursue what was now an urgent desire to be a writer. Xuefei Jin took on the pen name Ha Jin (the "Ha" coming from his favorite city, Harbin) and began the task of learning how to become a writer in the United States.

Nearly a quarter of a century on, it is clear that this migrant writer has succeeded. He is now a professor of English at Boston University, and his short stories and novels have earned him much acclaim and many awards. Until *A Free Life*, though, the focus of his gaze has been backward, over his shoulder and in the direction of the land he left behind. His novels *Waiting* (1999) and *War Trash* (2004) are redolent with loss, and the essential tone of his writing would suggest that a quiet lament informs his carefully modulated sentences. But there is also anger and frustration in Ha Jin's fictional world, for the Chinese bureaucracy is rigid and sometimes dogmatic, and his work has powerfully explored how Chinese authority and tradition often stifle human dignity and individual identity. Until, that is, his latest novel.

A Free Life, which appeared last year, is an epic work, with a panoramic vision whose narrative form resembles a hefty, plot-driven nineteenth-century English novel. Nan Wu, a student who is pursuing graduate work in political science at Brandeis University, and his wife Pingping become disillusioned with the prospect of returning to their homeland in the wake of Tiananmen Square. Nan decides to abandon his studies and instead to nurture his love of poetry, and to this end he takes a series of menial jobs while his wife remains a housekeeper and cook to a wealthy American widow. Nan and Pingping are reunited with their six-year-old son Taotao, who travels from China to join them in the United States, and they are thereafter free to begin life afresh as a family in Massachusetts. Eventually they leave the Northeast for an unappealing suburb of Atlanta, where they buy a Chinese restaurant located in a strip mall in a largely white, blue-collar, conservative rural subdivision. As they try to establish themselves as freedom-loving Americans who are attempting to run a business and pay off the mortgage on a modest home, Nan is increasingly haunted by his memories of China, including thoughts of a woman whom he believes he still loves. He is also consumed with his present struggle to understand how to compose poetry and to live the life of a writer. Naturally, as their son grows up and becomes more American in behavior and language, the turning hinge of generation starts to open the door onto an American world that Nan and Pingping often find baffling.

We soon learn that this United States can be a frightening place for Chinese immigrants. In an early scene in the novel, Nan takes time off from his duties as a night watchman at a local factory and goes to a nearby supermarket to pick up some food. While walking back to his car he is accosted by an aggressive white couple who want to take him to get "some young pussies." Nan hurries to his car and flees, but the couple pursues him. It is apparent that his "difference" has placed him, and by extension his family, in danger. A distraught Nan asks himself, "Why were they so determined to hurt him? Just because they could? Just because his face was yellow, not as white as theirs?"

At various points in the novel, Nan, Pingping, and Taotao encounter the problem of being migrants who are visibly different in skin color, accent, and culture. They are singled out for discrimination—but this is not the vision of America that Nan wishes to believe in. Despite these setbacks, the United States still represents for him opportunity and hope, in the same way that the country did when he first arrived as a student. He remembers: "Among some of his compatriots at Brandeis, Nan had a nickname, Mr. Wagon Man, because he had once quoted Emerson at a party—'Hitch your wagon to a star'—in an attempt to dissuade a linguist from switching to the field of economics. A historian, an arch-browed man from Henan Province, admonished Nan not to '*parrot that so-called New England sage*' who was a racist and always despised the Chinese."

Nan comes to understand much about prejudice and the perils of being the "other," but he attempts to contextualize his condition by looking at how others are treated; the novel is littered with references to blacks, Hispanics, and gay people. Yet Nan also understands that as a would-be writer he should set his course and navigate towards those, including "racist" New England sages, who might help him to come to terms with what it means to be a writer. And as the novel unfolds, it is clear that Nan Wu wishes to be a writer at least as much as he wishes to be an American.

The novel is unashamedly autobiographical, following the path of its author's own journey from China to Brandeis, and on to a series of menial jobs, then to suburban Atlanta, and finally to the writing life. Looking at the novel through such a lens does not diminish its achievement. It is a meditation on the development of a migrant writer's sensibility *and* an immigrant success story of how a Chinese family adjusts and eventually becomes a Chinese-American family.

Still, as readers we already have some experience of this "how we got over" story, not only with direct reference to the Chinese situation, but also in the many other novels of immigrant life that exist in our literature. As *A Free Life* proceeds, it soon becomes clear that the strength of the novel, and its originality, resides in its evocation of the growth of a writer who also happens to be an immigrant. Behind the well-constructed façade of the family story, the real drama concerns Nan Wu's individual struggle

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to remain focused and to nurture the impulse to find his literary voice.

Early in the novel, Nan leaves the family in Boston and travels to New York, where he tries to get a low-level administrative job at a Chinese cultural center. The interview does not go well, and on leaving the center he begins to speculate:

> Nan came out of the building with a sinking heart. Questions, one after another, were arising in his mind. Why do they call that place a cultural museum? Why are there so few exhibits that can be called artwork? How come there's no Picasso or Faulkner or Mozart that emerged from the immigrants? Does this mean the first Chinese here were less creative and less artistic? Maybe so, because the early immigrants were impoverished and many were illiterate, and because they all had to slave away to feed themselves and their families, and had to concentrate their energy on settling down in this unfamiliar, discriminatory, fearsome land. Just uprooting themselves from their native soil must have crippled their lives and drained their vitality, not to mention their creativity. How could it be possible for an unfettered genius to rise from a tribe of coolies who were frightened, exhausted, mistreated, wretched, and possessed by the instinct for survival? Without leisure, how can art thrive?

Yet Nan knows full well that this is not the whole story. Chinese migrants certainly have been writing stories about themselves and their culture, and in a passage that feels as though the author's unmediated opinions may be leaking through, Nan makes reference to "contemporary authors such as Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan, and Gish Jen." But Nan understands that such stories are subject to distortion and commercial pressure, and he is fully aware that "success" can bring with it vexing problems of authenticity.

On reading *A Free Life*, with its artful and anxious digressions on what it means to be both a migrant and a would-be writer, it becomes increasingly clear why Ha Jin's new book is a collection of three essays with the unambiguous title *The Writer as Migrant*. The three essays that make up this slender volume were originally delivered as lectures at Rice University in 2007, and one immediately feels the leaden weight of the academy's often baffling obfuscations in the author's one-page preface. "By placing the writer in the context of human migrations," he declares, "we can investigate some of the metaphysical aspects of a 'migrant writer's' life and work." And he continues: "I make references to many works of literature because I believe the usefulness and beauty of literature lies in its capacity to illuminate life." Well, yes, but where are we going with this? "I will speak at length about some exiled writers, not because I view myself only as an exile—I am also an immigrant—but mainly because the most significant literature dealing with human migration has been written on the experience of exile. By contrast, immigration is a minor theme, primarily American. Therefore, a major challenge for writers of the immigrant experience is how to treat this subject in response to the greater literary traditions."

The preface to the volume suggests the potential richness of an engagement with the subject of exile, but it already triggers alarm bells of doubt and frustration in the reader's mind. Why is immigration a minor theme, or for that matter an essentially American theme? Contemporary British literature is replete with outstanding work on this theme, including Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* and Timothy Mo's *Sour Sweet*. I doubt that either Selvon or Mo, coming from Trinidad and Hong Kong respectively, felt overly concerned with "the greater literary traditions."

Ha Jin's first essay, "The Spokesman and the Tribe," deals with what he calls the "Aristotelian questions—to whom, as whom, and in whose interest does he write?" At the beginning of his essay, he makes a passing reference to his own work. "My initial answers to those questions were quite simple. In the preface to *Between Silences*, my first book of poems, I wrote, 'As a fortunate one I speak for those unfortunate people who suffered, endured or perished at the bottom of life and who created the history and at the same time were fooled or ruined by it.'" Originally, Ha Jin considered himself a writer who was speaking for the downtrodden masses of Chinese people who he had left behind. He admits that his appropriation of such a position was partly motivated by guilt, but he realized that by taking up this self-appointed task he was opening himself up to accusations from those whom he claimed to serve.

He never reveals whether he was ever subjected to the scrutiny of people who might have demanded to know who gave him the right to speak for them. And having cracked open the door onto his own personal situation, he is quick to slam it shut again. He talks instead of what "the people" might do to "a writer" who seeks to claim such spokesmanship, and, having firmly established the character of "the writer," he liberates himself from any obligation to fulfill our expectation, or hope, that "the writer" will be Ha Jin. This is disappointing, for one cannot escape the feeling that, even at the inception of this book, the most fascinating example of "the writer as migrant" might be Ha Jin himself.

The opening essay looks at two cases of spokesmanship: Alexander Solzhenitsyn and the Chinese writer Lin Yutang, who, in Ha Jin's account, both embraced the notion of speaking on behalf of their people once they were outside of their countries, which subsequently caused great damage to their work. In the case of Solzhenitsyn, Ha Jin believes that "the books he wrote in Vermont are less literary than the novels he had written before his exile," which is largely due to the fact that in exile he sought in his work to bear witness and preserve the memory of the Russians who had no voice. While he champions (somewhat uncontroversially) *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, *The First Circle*, and *Cancer Ward*, he is sure that Solzhenitsyn's "later books do not have a firm artistic order, and their relevance might fall to the erosion of historical change."

This may well be true, but it seems also possible that even before he found himself in the backwoods of Vermont, events within the Soviet Union had already provoked Solzhenitsyn to re-assess the purity of his purpose as an artist. Surely *The Gulag Archipelago*, the first volume of which was published before his exile in 1974, already betrayed evidence that Solzhenitsyn's vision was being influenced by what Ha Jin calls "nostalgia," as opposed to a firm resolve to craft novels in the realistic tradition. If this is the case, then it would seem to follow that Solzhenitsyn's exile was not the sole cause of the artistic atrophy that Ha Jin seems to detect.

The episode in Solzhenitsyn's life that seems to fascinate Ha Jin is the "mystery" around the Russian writer's flirtation with naturalization as a U.S. citizen. On June 24, 1985, reporters and photographers waited inside the courthouse in Rutland, Vermont, for Solzhenitsyn to take the oath of American citizenship. But his wife showed up alone and received the certificate by herself, having

ANTHONY RUSSO

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explained that her husband was "not feeling well." Clearly Solzhenitsyn had changed his mind at the last moment and decided that he was not ready to give up on his native land. Ha Jin claims that "fortunately, he was coolheaded enough to restrain himself from attending the naturalization ceremony." Why "fortunately"? If Ha Jin has so little faith in the position of writer as "spokesman," and if he feels that such a position causes damage to one's art, why should he be so pleased that Solzhenitsyn maintained his "loyalty" to the Soviet Union?

One senses, without knowing exactly why, that this episode has a more personal meaning for the author; but his conclusions feel hurried and unsatisfactory. "This episode in Solzhenitsyn's life shows that despite the writer's careful construction of his relationship with his tribe, his role remains susceptible to change—any accidental, sometimes necessary, step might easily undermine the construction and force it to drastic revision," Ha Jin writes. "By writing about Solzhenitsyn's attempted naturalization, I do not intent just to point out the folly this great man almost fell into. What I mean is to illustrate the fragility of his identity as a spokesman for his people." But surely Solzhenitsyn was a far more complex literary figure than a "spokesman." Who, precisely, was he speaking for? The dead, in large measure. And his literary vision was wedded not so much to a people (his work was also a massive attack on what many Russians did and believed) but to a place, and to a very specific and idiosyncratic notion of that place. One always sensed that his tribe's view of Solzhenitsyn mattered little to him as long as he remained true to his own idea of the true Russia.

Ha Jin considers the case of the Chinese writer Lin Yutang so as to further demonstrate the perils of embracing the role of spokesman, although Lin Yutang faced the additional problem of having decided to write in English and, in some respects, to become an interpreter of his people for a Western audience. He was born in China in 1895 and earned a B.A. from Harvard in 1922 before eventually returning home. In 1935, while still in China, he published *My Country and My People*, his first book in English, which became an American best-seller. A year later, he migrated to the United States, where, for the next three decades, he devoted himself to writing in English. (He died in 1976.) Ha Jin is clear about the adverse consequences this had on his many works of fiction and nonfiction, not least the effect of encouraging him to "sweeten" the narrative so that some works read like popular romance.

He also insists that Lin Yutang spread himself too "thinly," producing many inferior books for money and then, after leaving the United States to live the last decade of his life in Taiwan, spending five years, from 1967 to 1972, compiling a large dictionary, *The Chinese-English Dictionary of Modern Usage*. Ha Jin describes this endeavor as a "mistake," because it was soon rendered insignificant by a similar project launched from within the state on the orders of Mao and boasting an editorial staff of more than fifty people. He is clear about what we should learn from this "mistake," although once again his conclusion feels unconvincing: "An exiled writer must avoid pitting his individual effort against any collective effort, because his principal asset is his creative talent and energy, which should be used primarily for creative work—great literature has never been produced by collectives." And it is great literature that Ha Jin is interested in, for only such literature "can penetrate historical, political, and linguistic barriers and reach the readership that includes the people of the writer's native country."

Having shown us some of the dangers and pitfalls that face the migrant writer who, like himself in the early period of his writing life, seeks to cling to some sense of attachment to his people, Ha Jin leaves the reader with the biggest question of all. Just how should the migrant writer comport himself with reference to his place of origin? One might have guessed where Ha Jin would look for his answer. Again he reverts briefly to memoir and recalls that "I still remember vividly my first reading of Naipaul's novel *A Bend in the River*, a book that changed my life. It was in late December 1992, three years after I had declared in the preface to my first book that I would speak for the unfortunate Chinese."

The second part of Naipaul's novel begins with a passage about a column of ants who remain undisturbed by the loss of a single member of their tribe. There is no contract between the individual ant and the collective, and it is up to the unfortunate individual ant to fend for himself. The passage reminds Ha Jin that in China there is still some notion of a relationship between oneself and one's country, whereas in the United States "I saw that such a contract gave you a false sense of entitlement. . . . Here you had to work like everyone else to put food on your table and had to learn to live as an independent man." It is Naipaul who frees him from the burden of speaking for the downtrodden Chinese and "the silliness of that ambition."

In this way Ha Jin comes to understand that a writer's first responsibility is to write well, and that the social role is only secondary, "mostly given by the forces around him, and it has little to do with his value as a writer." He carefully rejects Nadine Gordimer's notion of the writer as having a social responsibility to make an "essential gesture" and be more than just a writer. And he uncouples himself from his former fealty to Derek Walcott's line in "The Schooner Flight": "either I'm nobody, or I'm a nation." Finally he proclaims that "today literature is ineffective at social change. All the writer can strive for is a personal voice."

It is hard to disagree that literature must first and foremost be an individual expression, and that the writer must beware the corruptions of a representative voice. And yet some of Ha Jin's conclusions seem contestable. What of those writers in the Middle East, or Africa, or Southeast Asia, who continue to be harassed or jailed or killed because of their "essential gestures"? Not all of them are naïve romantics hitching a ride on the coattails of their nations with inferior, or sweetened, narratives. Is it really true to say that all literature is ineffective as social change? Does the writer have no social responsibility at all? While nobody can argue with the essential selfishness of a writer who chooses to abandon loyalty to a people and make his art the thing, it does seem a little presumptuous to suggest that this is the one and only way to produce great literature. Yes, yes, "the writer should enter history mainly through the avenue of his art. If he serves a cause or a group or even a country, such service must be a self-choice and not imposed by society. He must serve on his own terms, in the manner and at the time and place of his own choosing"—but why does this matter so overwhelmingly to Ha Jin? There is something coy about these lectures, in which he considers many cases of migrant writing except his own. His many digressions, both anecdotal and professorial, only clutter the way to a proper understanding of the reasons for his rather strident conception of his calling.

The second essay in the book, called "The Language of Betrayal," begins with the bold statement that "linguistic betrayal is the ultimate step the migrant writer dares to take; after this, any other act of estrangement amounts

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to a trifle." The essay then proceeds to an extended and rather pedestrian consideration of Conrad and Nabokov, which is properly footnoted and carefully argued, before coming to rest with the bland conclusion that a writer "must be loyal only to his art." The discussion here flickers to life only briefly, on the second page: "I have been asked why I write in English. I often reply, 'For survival.' People tend to equate 'survival' with 'livelihood' and praise my modest, also shabby, motivation. In fact, physical survival is just one side of the picture, and there is the other side, namely, to exist—to live a meaningful life. To exist also means to make the best use of one's life, to pursue one's vision."

Once again, just as the door opens up on the possibility of weaving his own experience into the narrative, Ha Jin slams it shut again and continues, "Joseph Brodsky once observed…." He later claims that "we writers who have adopted English … are all related to Conrad one way or another," but he says nothing about his own adoption of English. By leaving out his own story he has not only reduced the force of his argument, he has also created the opposite effect of what one assumes is a modest purpose. Far from praising his restraint, we are left wondering whether he really is in any way related to Conrad.

By the time one reaches the final essay, "An Individual's Homeland," one can almost predict what the conclusion is going to be. "Home" has nothing to do with a piece of land, for one cannot return to the same place as the same person; "home" is to be found in art, and more specifically in language, which, for a migrant writer who has changed language, must be always subject to continued interrogation and modification. In this essay the key texts are the *Odyssey*, Kundera's *Ignorance*, and once again Naipaul's *A Bend in the River*. Ha Jin is most interesting on Sebald's *The Emigrants*, but even here, while considering what happens to the artist Max Ferber in one of Sebald's stories, the analysis collapses into a flat result: "It is the intimate and inseverable connection with his past that keeps him sane and safe and provides for him the space in which he can practice his art. In other words, he has succeeded in constructing a kind of homeland for himself, to survive the violence and horror of history." Ha Jin seems to regard the migrant writer's art mainly as an asylum, a sanctuary that must above all protect his art from the intrusions and the imperatives of history.

There are two ways to read these essays. First, they are the reflections of a professor who has thought seriously on issues of migration, representation, language, and homeland as academic spheres of inquiry, and whose reading and erudition are dutifully on display. Approaching the essays in this manner, one must conclude that they are well-researched and well-constructed but finally unilluminating about their difficult and complex subject. One is inclined to put this professorial volume aside and reach instead for essays on the same themes by Chinua Achebe, Octavio Paz, Salman Rushdie, Czesław Miłosz, V. S. Naipaul, Mario Vargas Llosa, Wole Soyinka, and others—writers who have seriously grappled with these issues in their own work and who feel comfortable importing details of their own struggle, including autobiographical details, into their essays. These authors have, in every case, written pointedly about other writers and analytically left their own experience to one side; but when talking about issues that are so fundamental to their personal and artistic existence, they have not distanced themselves from the subject at hand.

The second way to read these essays is to approach them as though they have been written by a writer who has himself lived their subject. But then they read like a strange exercise in reticence whose purpose is unclear. If Ha Jin's hope is that we turn back to his fiction for the tensions, the ruptures, the betrayals, and the difficulties of being "the writer as migrant," then he has succeeded. For *A Free Life* is a far more profound meditation upon this condition than these critical explorations. Midway through the novel, Nan Wu ponders the difference between himself and an older scholar, Mr. Liu:

> Here lay Mr. Liu's tragedy—he couldn't possibly separate himself from the state's apparatus that could always control and torment him. Without the frame of reference already formed in his homeland, his life would have lost its meaning and bearings. That must be why so many exiles, wrecked with nostalgia, would eulogize suffering and patriotism. Physically they were here, but because of the yoke of their significant past, they couldn't adapt to the life in the new land. In contrast, Nan was an immigrant without a noteworthy and burdensome past. To the authorities, he was nobody, nonexistent. He didn't even have a Chinese official to beg. Who would listen to a man like him, a mere immigrant or refugee? People of his kind, "the weed people," survived or perished like insects and grass and wouldn't matter at all to those living in their native land. To the people in China, they were already counted as a loss.… The more Nan thought about these issues, the more upset he became. On the other hand, he was willing to accept the immigrant life as the condition of his existence so as to become a self-sufficient man. He felt grateful to the American land that had taken in his family and given them an opportunity for a new beginning.

Passages like this serve to remind us of how much energy the risk of self-revelation provides for Ha Jin's fiction, and how much we miss that energy in these often ponderous essays. ◆

A Pitbull on a Fire Escape

Sometimes the world comes to me. Sometimes it goes
away. Today, it's a pitbull on a fire escape; a flayed goat,
eyes still in their sockets, hung from a silver hook
in the butcher's window; the buzzing of a blue bottle
as it enters the flytrap, its azure. Scribble "abundance"
and the day will offer you one list. Scribble "elegy"
and it will offer you another. In the stationers, I buy
magnets and string, thinking of how ravel means
the same thing as unravel, how cleave means both to
sever and to cling. Next door, a man with a finger
missing is selling the cut flowers he wraps in cellophane.
We fall apart quickly as we become. Under the ground,
two trains are passing. The passengers, pressed up
against the glass, face outwards and observe, in the carriage
opposite, their mirror selves passing the other way.

CIARAN BERRY

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Oren Harman

TIME AFTER TIME

RHYTHMS OF LIFE: THE BIOLOGICAL CLOCKS THAT CONTROL THE DAILY LIVES OF EVERY LIVING THING
By Russell G. Foster and Leon Kreitzman
(Yale University Press, 276 pp., $19)

Man has invented many ways to measure physical time, from ancient sundials to water and sand clocks, from the pendulum to the wind-up pocket watch, all the way to the modern atomic clock. An example of this latter-day timekeeper, introduced in 1950, measures a second as 9,192,631,770 cycles in the energy radiation of the Caesium atom. This produces an atomic second, which is one-86,000th of a solar day, and is accurate to one second in three million years. Not bad, if you care about promptness. Whether time is real or not (as philosophers continue to ponder), whether without our constructions it really does "flow," what unites all clocks is that they measure a well-defined, regular, and uniform physical change of one kind or another.

In their wonderful book, Russell G. Foster and Leon Kreitzman tell us that while our ability to measure time has improved over the ages, we have nevertheless "been steadily losing a battle with time. Instead of controlling our modern clocks, they control us." Think about it: when we want to know when it is time to eat, or to go to bed, or to plan a vacation, we look at watches and clocks and calendars. Increasingly, these tools become dictators. But consider nature for a moment: without a Rolex or even a Swatch, the monarch butterfly knows to migrate from North America to Central America at precisely the same time each year. With no calendar and no alarm clock, the cicada emerges from the ground after exactly thirteen or seventeen years for a few fleeting weeks of frenzied mating—and the squirrel knows where and when to return to each and every one of its buried stashes of perishable goodies precisely before they lose their value and must be abandoned like surplus cottage cheese in the grocery. Bears hibernate, swallows rise to catch the early worm, and even plants seem as if they are silently counting the hours. This last fact has been known for some time: Linnaeus suggested back in 1751 that two species of daisy, the hawk's-beard and the hawkbit, be planted in a circle, since each opens and closes within precisely half an hour of the other, creating the hands of a floral clock.

So do organisms have invisible clocks and calendars? Has the march of civilization alienated us from our once equally intimate familiarity with nature? A first clue about such perplexities presents itself when we fly across oceans and find ourselves helplessly watching B movies in our hotel room at four in the morning: the difficulties of overriding jet lag—or the "work lag" of the night shift—are also the fruits of civilization. There are nuisances that are to be found only in the human world. All this makes it more difficult to answer the above questions with any conviction. We live in a "24/7" world, and have cleverly invented the modern means—electricity, alarms, heating, pharmaceuticals—to overcome our ancient evolutionary rhythms. No longer bound to the cadences of nature, we need not shiver in winter and rise early in the summer months—or so most of us believe.

But it turns out that we are wrong. Just like all the living things around us, we are constitutionally defined by our internal rhythms, and it takes more than a few thousand years of culture to override a few billion years of evolution. Heart attacks and births, Foster and Kreitzman report, occur most often between four o'clock and six o'clock in the morning. Toothaches are calmest after lunch, urine is produced fastest in the evening, and you are most likely to develop an allergic reaction an hour before midnight. Body temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure are all lower at night and higher during the day, and dance to a regular daily meter. Even cognitive ability varies throughout the day: take an exam at eight in the morning and your score is likely to be different from the result you would obtain on a test taken in the afternoon. In nature, there are intertidal, lunar, annual, and circadian ("about a day") rhythms, along with the lesser-known infradian (longer than a day) and ultradian (shorter than a day) cadences.

It stands to reason that such rhythms should have been etched into living beings over evolutionary time, for although the week and hour and minute are human inventions, the Earth will rotate on its axis about every twenty-four hours for at least the next five billion years, and the moon will wax and wane every 29.5 days, and the tide will roll over the waves twice a day, and Sirius the Dog Star will rise with the sun every 365 of them. For humans, it is primarily the circadian rhythms that govern much of our behavior (though female readers will rightly protest that I have never experienced certain rattling lunar effects). Whether you shake a hand firmly depends on the time of day, and may not seem all that important; but consider that there is a favored hour of lovemaking for married and non-married, child-rearing and childless, working and unemployed people, and your ear for chronobiology (named for Cronus, the Greek harvest deity) may suddenly perk up. There is a relationship, in sum, between our internal clocks and the outside world, and figuring out how that works has been one of the more exciting rides in modern biology.

The tale of chronobiology has many heroes going back to the 1800s, but as the neurobiologist Foster (himself a protagonist) and his co-author Kreitzman relate, the modern story really only begins in the early part of the twentieth century. In different places and with different organisms, clues began gradually to accumulate. It started with August Forel, a Swiss doctor and naturalist, who noticed one day in 1910 that a group of bees came to feed on the remains of his breakfast. The bees would appear every morning at precisely the same time, even when he tricked them and set no food on his table. Next it was the German-American scientist Curtis Richter, working in the lab of John Broadus Watson at Johns Hopkins, who noticed in the early 1920s that when he soundproofed and blackened the windows of the lab, muting all possible external stimuli, his rats seemed to behave in a rhythmic fashion, eating and feeding and treadmilling at fixed times. This was something of an irony, since it was occurring in the lab of the man who thought all behavior was just a matter of stimulus and response. More importantly, it led to a search for the source of the rhythm. After all, if pure behaviorism was out (since organisms react dif-

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ferently to the same stimulus in different contexts, and behaviors persist regularly without them besides), and if motivation, too, failed to do the trick (since it cannot explain why rats eat at given times irrespective of how hungry they are), then some kind of an internal clock seemed more and more obvious.

Some years later, in 1930, Erwin Bünning in Germany showed that the leaf movement of the common bean *Phaseolus* oscillated in complete darkness at a period of 24.4 hours. He called this period the "free-running" rhythm of the plant, and it soon became evident that what was true for the bean was true for the sea anemone, the kangaroo, the spider, and the weasel: organisms on Earth, including humans, have a free-running rhythm that is close to, though never precisely, a twenty-four-hour cycle. It became evident that while external cues could synchronize this rhythm to fit the twenty-four-hour day, they did not cause it; the free-running rhythm looked more like the ticking of some kind of internal clock.

The notion of an inner clock again gained support from the bees. Karl von Frisch had been studying the way bees locate sources of food, and more importantly how they report its location to their friends back in the hive. Figuring out how their waggles and angles of dance conveyed azimuth and distance would ultimately win him the Nobel Prize, together with the century's two other great ethologists, Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen. But the observation that when there was a headwind the bee reported a greater distance to the source of food made it clear that it had to have some internal sense of time. After all, distance traveled is time multiplied by speed, and the headwind meant that the speed to the prize was lessened.

But if bees and beans and humans have internal clocks, what common features would they be expected to share? At the heart of the clock would be a self-sustaining oscillator, something that counted off beats in regular intervals in the absence of any external time cues. There would have to be a setting mechanism or time-giver (*Zeitgeber*) linking the internal oscillation to the outside world—to the predictable movement of the sun and constellations, maybe even to temperature, magnetism, or food. And there had to be a means of making the output biologically useful—something we could observe as regular, rhythmic, adaptive behavior. But how could a set of biochemical reactions produce rhythms with a period of about twenty-four hours? The problem is that biological molecules are highly sensitive to temperature: an enzyme works at entirely different speeds as the temperature of its environment changes. Mammals and birds use homeostasis to create a stable internal environment, but what about algae and coral, or insects, lizards, and plants? The body temperature of such ectotherms fluctuates with the sun and seasons, and yet the rhythms of their lives remain fixed.

When a small group of experts met at Cold Spring Harbor in 1960, most agreed that despite this serious problem, there had to be inner clocks that were not dependent on external cues, though in truth none of them yet knew how this could work. What Colin Pittendrigh, who studied the emergence at dawn of *Drosophila* flies, had to say was amazingly prophetic: "The student of rhythms protests he has no common mechanism to give his field the unity he would like," the authors quote him, and yet there "are common mechanisms—built of different concrete parts—in circadian systems and photoperiodic effects everywhere." Pittendrigh could not have known how right he was. After all, the molecular revolution was just beginning; there were even still a few important scientists here and there who doubted the significance of the recent working out of the structure of DNA. And how would such "common mechanisms" work? It made sense that billions of years of evolution would relate life to the planet: if this were not so, birds would migrate south instead of north, fish eyes would not "flip" to their night mode when the time came, and Cro-Magnon man would wallow away his mornings in deep slumber. But what kind of inner oscillator plus external setting device could possibly be common to the diatom and the jellyfish, the alewife, the red-throated loon, and humans?

The road to the answer led in two directions. Down one path, researchers followed the lead of Richter, who had been able to show that lesions of the frontal part of the hypothalamus in rats abolish rhythmic circadian behavior. In 1970, researchers located the specific target in the hypothalamus that was playing the leading role—a small group of twenty thousand cells called the suprachiasmatic nuclei (SCN). Another lab confirmed that this was the special location by injecting radioactive amino acids into the eyes of rats and following the tracer molecules as they made their way through the optic nerve to the brain. As structures analogous to the SCN were found in birds and reptiles, people began to get excited. And when researchers, including Russell Foster, transplanted the SCN of a mutant hamster with an internal clock with a period of twenty-two hours into the brain of a normal anucleate whose behavior now adopted that same rhythm, they were ecstatic. Soon people were evocatively calling this tiny speck, its volume only one-third of a cubic millimeter, the "mind's clock."

The second path to the solution of the mystery of biological time followed upon the heels of one of the molecular revolution's great heroes. The son of Jewish immigrants from Poland, Seymour Benzer was given a microscope in Brooklyn in 1934 as a bar mitzvah gift. At fifteen he was already a scholarship student at Brooklyn College, though no one in his family had previously gone beyond the twelfth grade. Considered the "egg with two yellows" of his family, Benzer combined what his biographer Jonathan Weiner called "a feeling for physics and a feeling for the study of life." It was this rare combination that ultimately set his goals: to discover the physical characteristics of genes to understand how genes explain behavior.

At Purdue, Benzer developed a system that allowed him to show that genes were not indivisible, as was believed, but could actually be cut up into pieces. Mutant flies with curly wings were often the result of a single nucleotide base being replaced by another. Just as with the atom before Rutherford, it was hard to believe that the gene was not indivisible—that was bad enough. Much more outrageous was the heretical suggestion that certain behaviors, as opposed to mere physical traits or diseases, would be altered if a single gene was damaged. So it is perhaps not surprising that when a graduate student named Ronald Konopka arrived at his lab in Cal Tech in the mid-1960s, the notoriously late-sleeping Benzer set him on a course studying the genetics of circadian rhythms. Before long, Konopka discovered a mutant fly with no sense of time.

Crossing the mutant with wild-type flies revealed that the responsible gene resided on the X chromosome. It was dully dubbed *per*, for "period." Shortly after Benzer and Konopka sent "Clock Mutant of *Drosophila melanogaster*" to the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, the great man of molecular biology, Max Delbrück, came up to Benzer with a drink in his hand at a Pasadena party. "I don't believe it," he said in his thick German accent. "But Max," Benzer pleaded in his Bensonhurst drawl,

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"we found the gene!" Training his famous blue gaze right back at Benzer, Delbrück answered: "I don't believe a word of it." But it was real. And even though it was unclear whether there were other genes involved, and how precisely they coded for a timer, Benzer and Konopka had found the first-ever clock gene in any organism, firmly—some thought ominously—linking behavior to genetics.

In the decades that followed many details became clear, and while not all the cogs and pegs of the systems in all organisms have been fully worked out, the basic principle is simple: a clock can be constructed of a gene that codes for a protein which acts to inhibit its own production, and a second protein that delays this self-inhibition by a reliable amount of time. In the tiny mould *Neurospora*, for example, the gene *frequency* (*frq*) codes for the protein FREQUENCY (FRQ), which is regulated by another protein called WC-1. WC-1 is made eight hours later than FREQUENCY, which itself takes around sixteen hours to wind up back to its peak level, thereby creating a twenty-four-hour clock. It's as simple and as beautiful as that.

So how is the inner clock made to synchronize with the environment? How, in the end, does an organism's "free rhythm" match itself to the demands of the outside world? Here is an example from another organism. In *Drosophila* flies, the FREQUENCY and WC-1 equivalents are called PER and TIM. When light reaches TIM through the optic nerve of the fly, it degrades it in a regular, predictable fashion. In this way, with the help of a few other proteins, the PER/TIM feedback loop is aligned to the light/dark cycle, providing the crucial link between inner and outer worlds. This process is called "entrainment," and while cues such as temperature, food availability, humidity, and even social contact can act as triggers, light is nature's greatest entrainer of all.

This makes good evolutionary sense. Light is the most stable of these cues, and it can be used not only to signal dawn and dusk, but also, since the amount of light falling on the Earth varies precisely with latitude and season, to calculate the time of the year. This is how the salmon and the loon and the monarch know when to migrate, the roe deer and the wallaby and the cicada when to mate, the squirrel how to find its stash on time, and the tobacco plant and the evening primrose when to release their scents for pollinating nocturnal insects. It is how the internal private message becomes the external natural poem.

Sometimes the poem may be put to work for other purposes. Spanish farmers understood this centuries before latter-day tulip growers began manning their glowing tractors at night to expedite sales: over two hundred years ago, they were providing artificial lighting to increase egg production in chickens. Even NASA has been paying close attention: it is significant, and worrisome, in terms of astronauts' fatigue and performance, that there is no regular light in space, or that Mars has a day of 24.65 hours. Light has been such an important entrainer that evolution has even "invented" in mammals a whole new class of photoreceptors, different from the rods and cones used for vision, in order to bring it safely to the SCN in the brain. The surprise existence of such receptors, discovered in Russell's own lab six years ago, made it clear that even diseased eyes need to be kept intact in order to allow them to perform their circadian functions. Blind people, with no working rods and cones, still need their eyes for waking and sleeping.

As impressive as they may seem, these satisfying tales of scientific triumph are simplified versions of the story. How birds migrate, when animals decide to mate, even what precise proteins construct the *Neurospora* clock, are all difficult and complex problems. There is much that we still do not know. Still, figuring out the basic workings of the DNA "tick" and protein "tock" of all living beings' internal rhythms, and the external cues that entrain them, has been one of the most impressive journeys in the recent history of science. Showing that, since many of the genes and proteins that tell time are similar in mice and flies, there must have been an ancestral clock for insects and mammals going back seven hundred million years—and a much, much earlier one for bacteria—is an extraordinary accomplishment. What it all means is that, from the beginning, we have evolved to regulate our internal worlds, but also to keep in step with our planet. There is no inner without an outer.

There is also no single time for any given person, though this is not the subject of Foster and Kreitzman's book. We refer to time "flying" and time "crawling," even to time "freezing in its place." How we come to these judgments depends on our mental and emotional states, and on the ways they process information, rather than on a direct ability to sense or to perceive, as in feeling the heat of a candle advanced toward our face. A moment of remembered silence may be judged an eternity. Artists have depicted this: the description in *The Magic Mountain* of the tortured minutes experienced by tuberculosis patients in the sanitarium as their doctors take their daily temperature will not soon be forgotten by any reader who has a temperature, any temperature. Students of psychological time have shown that the perception of time is related to the degree to which we actually think about time, which is why amusement park lines snake around bends rather than extend infinitely backward, why mirrors are placed beside busy elevators and digital clocks on train platforms, and why a line into which someone cuts is judged longer by its slighted members than an equally long one where everyone behaves.

Time is an acquired concept, as any parent who has heard his toddler say "Let's go to Grandma yesterday" knows. In a famous experiment, the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget presented two racing snails to three-year-old children. Even though the snails started and stopped at the very same moment, the one who had gone a longer distance was judged by the kids to have traveled for the longest time. The five-year-olds finally got it: our concepts of speed and of distance are primary to our concept of time.

But psychological time is not the only sister of the physical and biological sorts, as the Ugandan "milking time," the Quechua "time of the boiling potato," and the Bedouin "cigarette" make abundantly clear. (Time walking from place to place is measured by Bedouin by the number of cigarettes smoked on the journey.) Generally speaking, in Western culture time is an independent variable that does not shrink or grow as a function of how one uses it (although this is far from how we perceive it), nor does it change from place to place. But the Hopi, by contrast, have no sense of simultaneity: two events cannot take place at the same time if they cannot be seen happening together. The ancient Chaldeans who invented astrology judged that time can be measured by the movements of celestial bodies. And because they believed that time determines destiny, the travels of stars were (and for many people still are) portents. Irrespective of the Rolex, molecular clocks, and the vagaries of the human psyche, cultural time is thoroughly and variously and colorfully constructed.

Besides physical, biological, psychological, and cultural time, there are of course the historical, evolutionary, geological, and cosmological time frames. This first

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one has since Herodotus been a subject of debate: do the events of the future really await their turn to appear? Should we imagine, as Collingwood quaintly asked us not to, that "the past and future exist in the same way … in which, when we are walking up the High past Queen's, Magdalen and All Souls exist"? On this question there is not much agreement. But geological and evolutionary time are another matter: here the battles have been waged not between all forms of predestinarians and anti-determinists, but rather between men and women who lack religious faith and those who have it. When James Hutton, the eighteenth-century Scottish geologist who discovered deep time, said of the Earth that "we find no vestige of a beginning—no prospect of an end," or when Darwin wrote that primordial man and the sea cucumber had a common ancestor, many believed—and still do—that the floodgates to hell had opened. As for the contemplation of the vastest time frame of all: whoever it was who said that "eternity is a very long time, especially toward the end," when we think cosmologically all of us suddenly smile at each other with a kind of warm feeling of excited wonder. There is something about reflection on the limitlessness of time that renders our usual human squabbles rather petty.

But let us return to our own biology. Philosophers may argue over whether time is real, but the unlucky few who suffer from the incredibly rare familial fatal insomnia, or even just the rest of us who experience good old-fashioned jet lag, do not feel as though we need to penetrate the philosophical argument too deeply—for us, the answer is obvious. As Foster and Kreitzman show in the last chapters of their book, chronobiology is not only about how cicadas know when to burrow through the ground and monarchs when to migrate, but also about when to dispense important drugs and how best to treat disease and cancers.

Consider familial advanced sleep-phase syndrome, or FASPS, in which people have a shifted wake/sleep cycle, falling into bed at 7:30 p.m. and waking before the roosters at 3:30 in the morning. Louis Ptácek at the University of Utah has found that the disorder is inherited, and that in some patients it is due to a single amino acid change in the protein encoded by the per gene. To date this is the first example of the genetics of a complex behavior in humans, the sapiens equivalent of Benzer and Konopka's *Drosophila* discovery.

The authors quote a wry remark about the discovery: "It seems that our parents—through their DNA—continue to influence our bedtimes." But these are serious matters. In England, about 3 percent of the population suffers from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), in which autumn and winter bring with them depression. SAD is much worse in the higher latitudes of Norway, where a frightening 27 percent suffer annually from the disorder, becoming sleepy, gaining weight, and often losing interest in life altogether. Rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, asthma, even cardiovascular troubles are all marked by strong circadian rhythms in the manifestation of symptoms. This last example is due to the fact that blood pressure and heart rate both peak in the early morning, which explains why most heart attacks occur at 6 a.m. (Heart attacks are also 33 percent more common in the winter than in the summer.) As if their days were not bad enough, sufferers of Alzheimer's have a disturbed circadian rhythm, making sleep at night an even more difficult prospect. A combination of bright-light and melatonin therapy may help relieve more general symptoms of this horrible affliction, an approach that doctors are now trying.

But there is a snag: chronotherapy is expensive and labor-intensive, and so it has yet to become a mainstay of the medical profession. Many of the drugs used to treat cancers, for example, attack rapidly growing cells at a particular phase of their division. The problem with chemotherapy is that such drugs also attack other rapidly dividing cells, such as hair follicles and bone marrow, resulting in baldness and pain. But the circadian rhythms of the healthy cells are often not the same as the rhythms of the cancers, so if the daily treatment is confined to the times when the cell cycle of DNA replication of the normal cells is lowest, anti-cancerous drugs may be dispensed in greater doses. It stands to reason, then, that patients should be treated with the body's clock in mind, and yet they usually receive their drugs at times that are convenient to the hospital employees, rather than at times that would be most effective in combating their diseases.

The larger issue is that we will be increasingly able to understand and to manipulate our rhythms. If you believe that necessity is the mother of invention and that money counts in this world, then the $40 billion annual tab for the effects of sleep disorders in the United States alone (through productivity loss, accidents, and medication) render the appearance of new targeted drugs, and eventually genetic intervention, more likely. Will we all want to take a pill or flip a gene that will free us altogether from slumber, or will we be content to limit its use to doctors, CEOs, busy moms, and fighter pilots? (The American military is already spending $100 million on research on a drug called modafinil, which cuts sleep requirements and is used in Iraq and Afghanistan today.)

We live in a maniacally fast and busy world, in which television and radio update our every minute and working hours and travel are increasingly heedless of the cadences of our planet. Evolution and chronobiology teach us that our inner and outer worlds are fundamentally connected. But finally how we view time is intimately connected to our dreams and aspirations—the way we would like to see the poem of our lives, and of our world, written. Will we wish to continue our growing detachment from the cycles of the sun and moon and tide and planets, or will nature more powerfully, or rudely, return us to its order? In the end, it may be up to us. ◆

After the Rape

The stream made a merry little sound as it washed her brain and her britches. She dug deep into her sack of surplus fears. It was the last day.

She died by inches. A doctor in that time was never thought of—he was next to the undertaker—and besides, who had the money?

She was young. She had not been interested in dying. But no one she knew ever went anywhere except to die. Nothing was supposed to turn out right.

She lay there and drank deep like a stone-age woman in evil luck, addressing unfeeling gods who had not protected her from interested violence.

For her, life and death gurgled the same. She died like a ripe pomegranate with his supple hot red seeds going *pock pock pock* inside her.

KATHRYN STARBUCK

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Washington Diarist

Out There

Counterfactuals are the inventions of logic or misery. The interest in an altered world is not born of contentment. But when the imagined improvement turns out also to be real—well, here is the most unlikely true story about Jews in modernity that I ever heard. It was told to me many years ago by a Jew, an American judge, who grew up in the Jewish community of Goa, in India. It happened during the partition riots in 1947. He related that rampaging gangs sometimes broke into his family's house, armed with pistols and axes and torches, and of course with anger. "Are you Hindu or Muslim?" they demanded to know, in their hunt for the appropriate victims. "We are Jews," the family replied. And the mob apologized! "We're terribly sorry," they said, and left the Jews in peace. For a long time I laughed heartily at the sublime absurdity, I mean by the tenebrous standards of the Jewish past, of this event. The story of the Jews of Bombay is also filled with sweet ironies: its first synagogue was built at the end of the eighteenth century by a Jew who was saved from the sword of Tipu Sultan, the Tiger of Mysore, when the tiger's pious mother, who had read about Jews in the Koran, wanted finally to meet one, and in the nineteenth century Jewish culture in the city owed its small flowering to the hapless efforts of Scottish missionaries, who failed to impart Christianity to the Jews but did teach them Hebrew and a rudimentary knowledge of Jewish customs. But now I laugh no more. Whether the terrorists in Mumbai killed for Kashmir or for Waziristan, they nonetheless killed Jews, whose civilization developed in perfect indifference to Kashmir and Waziristan. Forgive the liberal heresy, but why are Jews never the inappropriate victims? (On each of the two days of the horror, reporters in *The New York Times* wondered whether "the Jewish center was strategically chosen, or if it was an accidental hostage scene." The speculation was ignorant and insulting.) I cannot yet pick myself up from the image of the dying rabbi wrapping his dead wife in a prayer shawl, in a last fulfillment of tradition in a far corner of exile. The carnage at the Chabad house stimulated in me a grim and therefore classical sensation of peoplehood. When the fate of the Jewish hostages in India was first announced by the authorities in Israel, I thought: this is as it should be, it is the Jewish state that should speak for them. But I will not make too much of this nationalist quiver. It is sometimes a part of the problem.

Owing to the aforementioned allegiance, and also for more general reasons, I do not look kindly upon the delegitimation of whole countries and entire societies; and I do not yearn for a restoration of imperial order, even after all the post-imperial disorder. (Anyway, empires are not orderly.) For a long time I enjoyed a rich personal engagement with Pakistan. I recall fondly the many hospitalities of Karachi and Lahore. It would have been imprudent for a *yehudi* exploring the land not to have committed to memory the first verse of the Koran, but I encountered no hostility in my travels. In Karachi I was taken to see the shuttered synagogue, and met an extraordinary man who had known Mr. Abraham Reuben, the Jew who was once a prominent city official. I will not soon forget my morning of tranquil seclusion at the ancient Buddhist monastery at Jaulian, or the still, dustless lucidity of Lake Saif-ul-Maluk, high in the Kaghan Valley, which gave me the rare gift of an Emersonian exaltation. (All my life I have suffered from mystic envy.) In Lahore I was deeply stirred by its journalists and its democrats. So I do not want the following question to be mistaken by my Pakistani friends for another expression of American haughtiness—but how much peril, and for how long, will this tormented place inflict upon the world? Tormented often turns into tormenting; and Pakistan's most significant export now is crisis. I leave aside the contributions to world peace of the national hero A.Q. Khan. But the tribal areas: will the medievalism of those mountains, the holy war that is practiced there and proliferated elsewhere, really go unmolested? I grant all the complexities: the failure of the Pakistani state to cohere (but no state can cohere that does not master its own borders); the nasty game that various governments have played with the savage theocrats in the west (there is no distinction any longer between "the problem of Afghanistan" and "the problem of Pakistan"); the shattering consequences for Pakistan of the Afghan war in the 1980s; the arduous struggle in Pakistani society to honor the tolerant and secular legacy of the founder of the Pakistani state; and so on. But still! Now I read that Asif Zardari, an old joke that is no longer funny, is on the enlightened side of all these matters, but I have no confidence in the principled nature of Bhuttoism. The truth is that every society must settle its character on its own. Neither its friends nor its enemies have the right, or the power, to do the work of its self-representation. I support the intelligent use of American force against Al Qaeda and the Taliban in the tribal areas—how can you infringe upon sovereignty where there is no sovereignty?—but only the Pakistanis themselves can end this suppurating historical scandal. Only they can determine, not without bitter internecine conflict, what kind of country they wish to be. Until they do, the global body count will rise.

On the second night of the atrocity in Mumbai I was hungry for news and turned on CNN. What I got was John Legend moving himself, and the audience, at something called "A Celebration of Heroes," with a revoltingly sanguine song. It is called "If You're Out There," and it is one of those grandiose Quincy Jones-ish anthems to an easy eschatology. I expect to hear it a lot around January 20, when all will be put right. "If you're out there/ Sing along with me/ If you're out there …/No more broken promises/ No more call to war/ Unless it's love and peace that/ We're really fighting for/ We can destroy hunger/ We can conquer hate …": that is what I heard while the Taj was burning. As dumb as the Youngbloods in my day, except for its groove. When trouble comes, these souls will be useless. I reflect now on the beautiful reliefs at Jaulian, which defeated the hordes of the White Huns in the fifth century when the heat of the fires that were set to destroy them turned clay into terracotta and preserved them. Toughness is the condition of a gentle world. There are all kinds of people out there, and a great quantity of fire.

Leon Wieseltier

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Americans may eventually find a way to live without oil. Water is another story.

Optimistic Americans believe we will eventually replace our dependence on oil with alternative fuels. There is no alternative for water. It is the one resource that humans can't live without for more than a few days. Yet many experts see water shortages as a looming crisis of massive proportions. Evidence abounds. Robert M. Hirsch of the U.S. Geological Survey reports some parts of the country are now depleting water that has been around since the ice age. California water officials say population growth is outrunning water supply and that the state will be short on water by 2020. Every newcomer to California adds 140 gallons of water demand per day. El Paso, San Antonio and Albuquerque could run out of water by 2020. Central Florida could run out of water in five years. In Kansas, the high plains aquifer will be used up within twenty-five years. And upstate New York's reservoirs are at record lows. A water shortage will make an oil shortage seem trivial. What can we do to head off a water crisis? The first step is limiting waste, especially in irrigation. The second is limiting demand by managing a population explosion driven almost totally by immigration. If we can all agree on an immigration plan that is fair and workable, we can avoid the projected growth of another 100 million people in just 30 years*. If we don't, the demand for fresh, clean water will continue unabated. Until the tap runs dry.

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